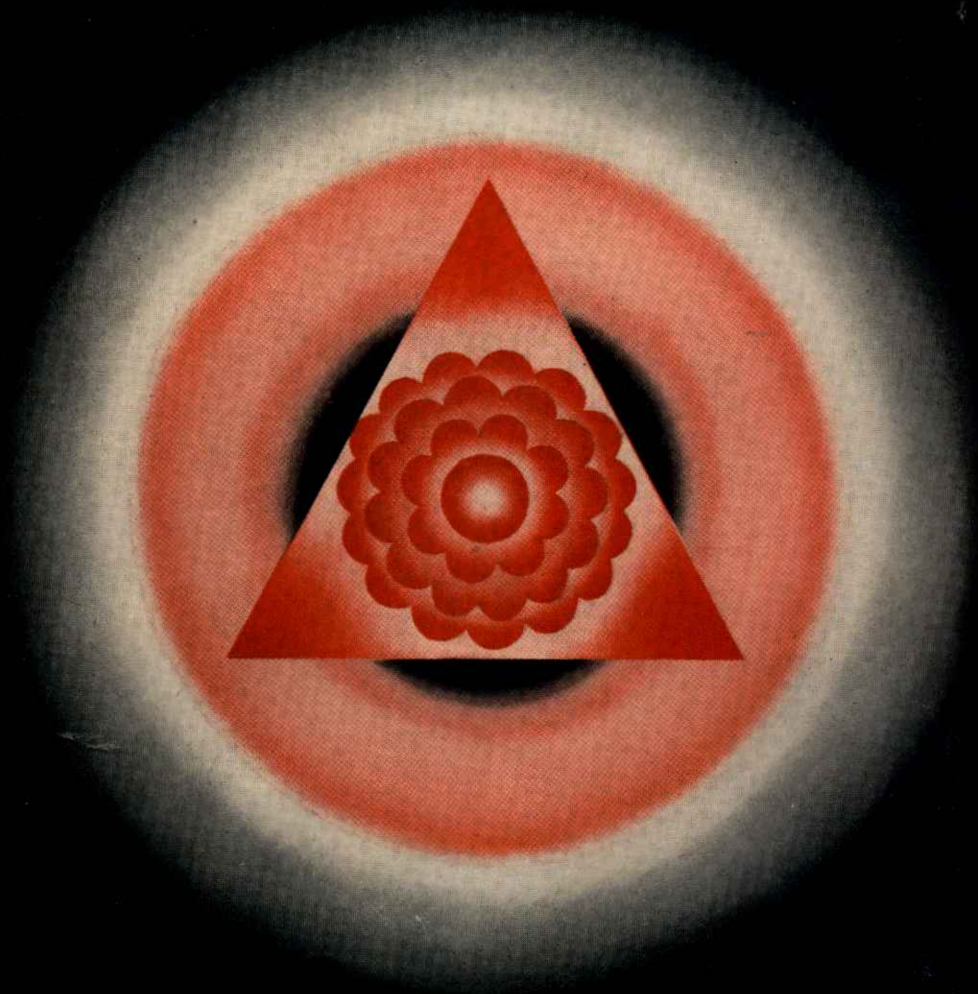
TANTRAS
A GENERAL STUDY



Manoranjan Basu

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To My Parents

Late Kshetra Gopal Basu and Kamala Bala Basu

Foreword

In the short compass of only five chapters of a small book like this the author has managed to offer to the 'English-knowing public' not only a fairly comprehensive general account of the philosophy of Tantra but also, to say the least, a not-improbable history of the cultural development of India in older days and a study even of the relevance of Tantra for the future shaping of Indian life and culture.

Before presenting the philosophy of Tantra he has naturally had to remove many of the unfortunate misconceptions of what Tantra is really about and has shown, in that connexion, how, literally, it was and has even continued to be at the centre of all that is truly Indian in Indian culture. Philosophy that is relevant to life is always a living analysis of experience, an account of the experiential possession at every step of analysis, as much at the natural level as at the level of transcendence; and Tantra is exactly that—a sort of phenomenology enlivening reality. Our author, as much a *sadhaka* as an academic thinker, has eminently succeeded in deciphering the otherwise complicated epistemology and ontology of Tantra, though only in outline in this book. It is probably for the first time that a book of this type is published.

The account he has given of some practical aspects of Tantra, i.e., of some techniques of Tantra *Sadhana,* is equally satisfying, in as much as he has taken care to develop it in close correspondence with the theoretical philosophy of Tantra—a merit we seldom come across in modern works on the subject. In making his presentations, he has taken particular care that they be as precise as possible and yet not forbidding, and on *Cakras* and some mystic letters and syllables he has thrown sufficient light to make them *intelligible,* at least to those who have understood the theoretical philosophy of Tantra.

I am associated with the author for more than thirtyfive years and for all these years we have been in closest touch in deciphering the intricacies of Tantra and the philosophies of Kant, Hegel, K.C. Bhattacharyya and Sri Aurobindo. Needless to say, I have profited enormously from his actual spiritual

experience, and I have learnt from him that a true Tantrika is never oblivious of the actual state of affairs he lives in ; he only looks at these affairs from a new integral spiritual point of view.

The present work is only an introduction to a bigger project—already completed and shortly to be published—entitled *Fundamentals of the Philosophy of Tantras,* where all points, particularly the *philosophy* of Tantra, have been studied more thoroughly and on a profounder scale.

Kalidas Bhattacharyya
Formerly Director, Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy;
Vice-Chancellor, Visva Bharati, Santiniketan.

Introduction

To introduce 'Tantras—a general study', I should state something about the subject which would, I hope, assist the readers to go through the work.

To begin with, the cover is a symbolic presentation of the Tāntrika view of evolution which goes side by side with the process of involution only to evolve again. The theory of Evolution according to the Tantras, is a matter of eternal recurrence; it never comes to a dead stop. The dark background of the cover represents a state of nothingness (śunyatā), otherwise called negation. It is only in black where all colours stand negated. Similarly, it is in white, where all colours are in a state of consummation. The diagram placed in the centre, called *Yantra*, is a moving circle which suggests dynamism on the one hand and the Universe or Universes coming into being and passing away to come again, on the other. This is what we may call processing out (ābhāsan), going on eternally. Within the circle there is a point, dense and white tinged with reddish glow called *Bindu*, which from the point of the alphabets is symbolic of the letter '*ma*'. From the point of *nada* otherwise called sound-potential, the said *Bindu* may be designated as *Sabda Brahman* or *Logos*, the source of all conceivable evolution or manifestation of the said Universe or Universes. It should be noted here that the aforesaid *Bindu* represents both the elements of Śiva-Śakti in terms of Revelation, revealing Itself. The half-blown Lotus within the triangle stands for Indian culture and the triangle, constitutive of forty-eight letters of the alphabets, is symbolic of the dynamic aspect of Indian Spiritualism. The triangle as *Yantra* which belongs to the Śakti group is very significant in the esoteric aspect of Tāntrika practices. Within the original circle, there are three circular layers or strands coloured whitish, reddish and darkish, representing Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, the constitutive elements of the grand *Avyakta*, called Prakṛti, the necessary pre-condition of things and beings to evolve or manifest. The said moving *circle* finally dissolves into eternity, the state of great expansion (mahā

vyāpti), called Nothingness in terms of Fullness and Perfection. The idea of *Cakra* as a symbol is very ancient and significant in the spiritual-cultural History of India. It goes back to the Vedas. In the *Rig Veda* it is conceived of as *rta,* the symbol of eternal order or law. The mystic *Cakra* of the Aśvins represents the esoteric aspect, the secret doctrines of the Yogins. In the Upaniṣads, in the anugīta of the Mahābhārat *Cakra* has been used in its metaphysical aspect. All this shows that *Cakra* plays a very important role in the dynamic aspect of the spiritual-cultural History of India.

2. The title of the book indicates that the work is not a critical exposition of the fundamental principles of the Tantras, nor demonstration of the practical aspect of the Tāntrika sādhanā which is essentially esoteric by nature. It is a study of the Tantras, in a general way, the main object of which is to present the subject in its true perspective to the English-reading public both in our country and abroad. It should be noted here that the image of the Tantras has been lowered in the estimation of the enlightened public because of some confusing statements, made about the subject, by some scholars, alleged to be orientalists. That Tantra is a discipline, a method and a study, based on rational foundation and conceivable in theoretic consciousness and realizable in yogika experience—without considering all these, they have, in their own convenient way, picked up from a particular type of sādhanā some of the practices which are apparently basal and *prima facie* obnoxious and on the basis of them they have commented that the Tāntrika spiritual practices resort to sexual indulgence. It should be mentioned here that in the Tantras ideal of womanhood has been epitomised and raised to the exalted stage of motherhood which is something unique in the history of spiritual literature of the world. Moreover, it is pointedly stated in the Tantras that the secret of life lies in sex-control and death is sex-indulgence. (Maranaṁ Bindu Pāten, Jīvitam Bindu Dhāranāt), Further as against the conventional ascetic discipline, the Tantras uphold the theory of sublimation in which asceticism has been equated with sexuality. In this theory, desire itself, subjected to rigorous discipline, is used to conquer desire.

There are others, who pass anything that is ugly, erotic, spiritistic and magical, by the name of the Tantras. They produce phantastic stories with some absurd episodes relating to astral plane, and connect them to the Tantras. They forget that Tantra is a meta-science (Surya-Vijñān) dealing with consciousness, verifiable at every stage in spiritual experience.

My task in this work, I have already mentioned, is to present the Philosophy of the Tantras in its true perspective, i.e., what Tantras really stand for and what are its objectives. Throughout the work, I have tried to follow the maxim, neither do I propose, nor do I impose but to expose only. In presenting the correct attitude of the Tantras, in some of the chapters, I have taken assistance from the writings of some of the distinguished scholars such as Late Dr. P. C. Bagchi and Śhri J. C. Chatterjee in the historical retrospect, Late Dr. H. D. Chaudhury in universal and integral view of consciousness, Late Svāmī Pratyāgātmānanda Sarasvatī in the theory of polarity, and ṣaḍadhvān and Shrimat Anirvān in defining tradition. About ṣat kancukas of the Pratyabhijñā compared with the categories of understanding of Kant, I have taken assistance from Late Professor Humayun Kabir's exposition of Kant. But I have to state here that the main thesis of this work is based on the Original Scriptures (both Śaiva and Śākta Ágamas) and the commentary is exclusively my own.

3. As to the subject-contents of the work, Chapter I covers an introduction of the 'Historical Retrospect' of the Tantras, in which authenticity, antiquity and widespread influence, the Agamikā culture commands over the lives and living of the people of India and abroad, have been considered. As a point of information, the specific charges against the Tantras and its main characteristics have been fairly discussed.

In Chapter II, the term, Tantra has been defined, to give a definite idea of the subject. The denotative and connotative characters of the Tantra have been stated to clarify some of the misconceptions about its contents and in this context three significant terms, Tattva, Mantra, Kalā, have been interpreted to show what Tantra really stands for. Further, the concept of ṣaḍadhvān (ṣaḍa=Six, adhvān=way) has been introduced in

this chapter in the context of the Kalā, which has been explained from different points of view. The six-ways are primarily meant for the realization of the Supreme Truth. This Chapter, I think, will give the readers a true perspective of the Tantras, which has been interpreted by different people in various ways.

In Chapter III, Tantras have been analysed as Critique of Experience. Consciousness in different aspects plays a vital role in the Philosophy of the Tantras and experience is the guide-line which analyses and determines the nature of the said consciousness both in the empirical and in the transcendental. Experience in the Tantras may also be analysed in terms of consciousness, conscious of itself. In the intellectual, the attitude of the Tantras quite fits in with the spirit of the Greek culture. Just after the death of Socrates, Plato addressed the Athenians by saying, 'The unexamined life is not worth living. In another world I shall continue my search into true and false knowledge. In another world, they do not put a man to death for asking questions'. In the Tantras also because of its practical and realistic nature, nothing is accepted without scrutiny in terms of experience. Further, in the Tantras, it is claimed that, proper analysis of the empirical reveals the feasibility of the spiritual in terms of transcendence.

In Chapter IV, the Ways of Realization as Freedom has been discussed. A question may be posed here—who is competent to practise the lessons of the Tantras (Tantraśāstrādhikāra) ? In the 2nd chapter of the Gandharva Tantra, it is stated that the Tantra aspirant must be intelligent (dakṣa), with senses controlled (jitendriya), abstaining from injuries to all beings (sarva-hiṁsā-vinirmukta), ever doing good to all (sarva-prani-hiterata), a believer in the self as existence (āstika), whose faith and refuge, is in Brahman (Brahma vādi ... Brahma parāyana) and who is a non-dualist (dvaitahīna).

Further, intellectual apprehension of the Tattvas, strenuous self-sacrifice, unflinching devotion to Śāstras and their teachings, observance of the rituals and yogika practices are regarded as efficient methods of approach to Śiva, the Supreme Self.

In this Chapter, three ways of realization such as śāmbhava, śākta and ānava recognised in Kāśmīra Śaivism, together with

Vīra Śaiva idea of Freedom, have been discussed. It is interesting to note that the Pratyabhijñā School of Kāśmīra Śaivism has close affinity to the Śāktadvaitavāda of the Eastern Regions, particularly of Bengal and Assam.

In Chapter V, an attempt has been made to present the crisis of the modern age and the role the principles of the Tantras could play to solve such a crisis. In this context the six cakras (ṣat cakra), piercing of the cakras (ṣat-cakra-bheda), the power as Kundalini and the role of Kundalini in realizing the self as knowledge, have been discussed. The main object of this Chapter is to show that the solution of the present-day crisis lies, to a great extent, in awakening our latent consciousness and self-analysis.

The above statement of the subject-contents reveals the outline of an Indian system of thought which is resourceful in experience, rich in contents and colourful in many of the inner secrets of Indian culture. It is realistic in attitude, practical in application and sublime in spiritual aspiration. In this system nothing is rejected as completely lost; rather everything is accepted and hence accommodated in its respective potential value. It is a living philosophy, whose true spirit is now lost, nay ill-conceived, misinterpreted and badly practised. In the modern world crisis it has got a definite role to play and deliver a message of hope to the problem-stricken humanity.

In conclusion, I shall be failing in my duty if I do not acknowledge my sense of gratitude and indebtedness to persons who through inspiration and material assistance have helped me to produce this work.

I remember with a deep sense of reverence the names of Late Svāmī Pratyāgātmānanda Sarasvati and the great savant of Sanskrit culture, Sarva-tantra-svatantra Late M. M. Gopinath Kaviraja, Vidyā Vācaspati, who by their personal magnetic touch have enlightened me and helped me to understand to my capacity some of the most difficult and highly technical concepts of the Tantras. In the same breath, I do recall with a deep sense of regard the services rendered ungrudgingly by my teacher, Dr. Kalidas Bhattacharyya, a metaphysician, who through constant inspiration and technical assistance, has helped me in such a way as no words can express. Besides this, I have been

immensely benefited by his learned discourse on the fundamental problems of philosophy, East and West.

My thanks are due to Dr. Biswanath Banerjee (Visva-Bharati), Shri Amitava Chaudhury (Yugantar), Shri Jogavrata Ghosh (U.N.I.D.P.), Dr. Arabinda Bhattacharya and Shri Sudhangsu Kumar Mukherjee amongst others.

Last but not the least, I put on record, my sense of indebtedness to Shri Nirad Baran Mukherjee and Shri Sudhir Chandra Mukherjee of The Radiant Process, Calcutta. In Shri Nirad Baran Mukherjee is noticed a rare combination of head and heart—an intellectual acumen mixed with spirit of service and urge for spiritual endeavour. Shri Sudhir Chandra Mukherjee is conspicuous by his natural cheerful disposition and literary bent of mind. Both of them, by their constant encouragement and material assistance, have helped me to pull on with this work.

Thanks are also due to the workers of the Printing and Block Departments of The Radiant Process, Calcutta, who by their constant vigilance have seen the work through the press. Defects, if there be any, are entirely due to my inadvertance and credit, if any, goes to the workers of the press.

I remember with a sense of affection the services rendered selflessly by Shri Mrityunjaya Chatterjee, a young visualiser, who through untiring efforts gave the cover a shape. The idea was originally initiated by Shri Sudhakar Dutta of Ankan, Calcutta, for which I am thankful to him.

Finally, by going through this work, if a single soul becomes Śiva-minded and feels the urge of practising Śakti-consciousness for the good of the society, I shall count my labour amply rewarded.

50/B, Halderpara Road,
Calcutta-700026.
June 29, 1976

Manoranjan Basu

Contents

सर्वं सर्वात्मकम्

HISTORICAL RETROSPECT

CHAPTER I

In this section, I propose to state some of the historical facts which are necessary for the appraisement of the antiquity of the Tantras in general and the great influence the Tantrika systems command over the lives and the living of the people both in India and abroad from the hoary past to the present day. The object here is not to discuss the history of the Tantras purely in chronological order but to present data relevant to the cultural tradition of India and outside. The terms such as 'tantra', 'mantra' and 'yantra' are sometimes used as synonymous, but the 'yantra' aspect of the Tantras will not be discussed in this work and the 'mantra' side of the Tantras will only be referred to in a stray manner. Further, the terms āgama and tantra are sometimes used in the same sense as the Veda is sometimes meant by the name 'nigama'. But, strictly speaking, the scope of the 'tantra' is wider than that of 'āgama' as the former deals with as many as about twenty-five subjects, such as the knowledge of Brahman as Brahman, Brahman as Consciousness, the nature of the Brahman as Consciousness, the principles of creation, maintenance and destruction of the world, concealment and grace, and the names of the Tantras belonging to different sects, whereas the term 'āgama' covers only seven of the said twenty-five subjects, especially the revelation side of the Tantrika knowledge. It may be mentioned in this connection that the term 'yāmala' is sometimes used in the context of the Tantras and further that the Yāmalas (*) precede Tantras, but it should be

*Yāmala—The Nārayanīya Tantra says that the Vedas have originated from Yāmalas which form a class of Tantras of considerable magnitude. The hymns of Sāmaveda find expression in Brahma-Yāmala, that of RgVeda in Rudra-Yāmala, that, of Yajurveda in Visnu-Yāmala and that of Atharva Veda in Sakti Yāmala. The verses which have been quoted by the great Siddha Sarvānanda in his compendium *Sarvollasa Tantra* may also mean that the Yāmalas preceded the Tantras. Although this is not an acceptable proposition, it is fair that the view should be mentioned here, thereby opening out a path for discussion.

noted here that the scope of the Yāmalas is far more restricted than that of the Tantras in general in so far as they (Yāmalas) deal with five of the main principles discussed in the Tantras in general.

The term 'tantra' is also sometimes used in the sense of a system having predominance of Śāktaika (Power) character while 'āgama' bears an overtone of Śiva in terms of Knowledge. But it is a recognised fact that in the philosophy of the Tantras Consciousness as Power (Śakti) and the Possessor of the Consciousness as Power (Śaktimāna) are identical in the sense that Consciousness as Power (Śakti) is always considered in the Tantras as conscious of Itself as 'I' in terms of Śiva. Hence, in this work, the term 'tantra' has been used in a general sense accommodating all other aforesaid similar terms it covers. Moreover the prime object of this work is to exhibit the philosophy of the Tantras in general in terms of consciousness as power and gaining experience thereof. However, like the Vedas the base of the Tantras is Revelation, or, in other words, consciousness involving knowledge as Transcendental Act. Hence the Ágamas or Tantras fall within the fold of Śraūta Śāstra (that which is heard) or revealed scriptures.

To discuss and interpret Śāstras or scriptures from the historical point of view involves *prima facie* some basic difficulties. First of all, the said scriptures are not supposed to have originated in time nor are they the products of ordinary human consciousness. Such scriptures are said to be of divine origin. Further, they are called eternal and immutable; they are what they are—pure and simple.

Like the Vedas, the Tantras or the Ágamas are designated as Śraūta Śāstras brought down to us from time immemorial through spiritual tradition. Hence, the historical study of such revealed texts brings in some *a priori* difficulties. Outwardly these Śāstras denote injunctions (niyama) and practices (vidhi) and essentially connote the nature of being revealed and revealing at the same time. Logically speaking, the said injunctions of the Śāstras are considered as regulative ideas working as corrective of undue speculation. Spiritually, they are some pure experience-concepts realizable in terms of revelation of the mysteries of

men and matters. Ethically they are called directive principles determining what is good and what is bad in the empirical. But so long as there is a world to live in and consciousness to know and survive, the Śāstras in the aforesaid sense shall remain in some form or other.

Further difficulties might crop up at a time when the said scriptures are brought down to the level of communicative language. Ácāryas (spiritual preceptors) interpret them in their own respective ways and various commentaries and elaborate critical notes are made on them, as a result of which the main object for which they were initiated got lost ; round about those interpretations of the Ácāryas different sects (sampradāyas) with their respective beliefs and ideas come into being. These beliefs and ideas go on from age to age and in course of time form traditions(*) and those traditions give birth to various types of practice on the one hand and ideas on the other. Each and every sect claims superiority over other sects and as a result rivalry ensues amongst them. Further, every sect claims infallibility of its own idea, and a mind not used to and initiated in such sectarian religious traditions from the very start finds tremendous difficulties to get the correct interpretations of the scriptures. To him either all the interpretations are correct or none of them. But the second alternative cannot be accepted as there is a marked gradation of human beings each according to his natural disposition and culture and every system has peculiar characteristics of its own, its own logic and epistemology, mode of argument and way of spiritual liberation. A sauce to a goose may not be a sauce to a gander. What suits a particular aspirant may not be suitable to an aspirant belonging to a different sect. So every system has its own value in its own respective domain. The varied

* Tradition (aītihya) which may forget and distort facts is nevertheless a form of racial theory which faithfully preserves the psychological atmosphere in which it came into being. It becomes an aid to the construction of a history of thought, if with a penetrative insight and logical imagination we can discover the *a priori* scheme from which the thought movement gathered its life-impulse. For example, the Yājnavalka or Dattātraya tradition is important in this respect ; it clearly suggests the continuous existence of an esoteric interpretation of the Vedic or Āgamic sects or cults respectively.

interpretations of the śāstras are, therefore, tenable from the point of varying temperaments of individuals forming different religious sects. It should be noted here that philosophy in India never stands sundered from religion. It is never considered as divorced from religious life.

Further, historical study in the said religio-philosophic field becomes necessary if the spirit of the age is taken to be an acceptable proposition. Every age bears some singular characteristics of its own ; those characteristics or traits are products of a long-drawn process of tradition (already stated). The laws of society are dynamic and inexorable. The old order changeth yielding place to new. Traditional faiths and beliefs get remodelled and reoriented according to the exigencies of material conditions and way of thinking changing. Side by side ideas also change and assume new forms and colour. History of Linguistic Studies shows that the connotation of a particular term changes as time rolls on. The inner logical structure regulating the different systems of ideas sometimes gets so much into formalities and niceties that it leaves behind its spirit for which it was originally meant. Progressive historical studies further show that many ideas get outdated and sometimes they become inadequate to cover the intellectual demands of the day and ultimately become ineffective and get lost into the depth of abysmal time. Historical studies try to rediscover these ideas long lost and assess their value in new form and reoriented spirit. Moreover, in the cross-currents of history different ideas get fused with one another and as a result these ideas become interspersed and distorted. In such cases history undertakes the task of salvaging those ideas from the debris of fusion and interspersion and try to reinstal them in their proper places and outlook. So in the case of religio-philosophical systems where logical analysis about the fundamental ideas, social practices and values and their adaptations to different ages are counted, we cannot avoid history altogether.

Like other śāstras, Ágama śāstras have undergone changes age-wise both in form and practice. How such changes of Ágama śāstras have taken place, how the said śāstras from their pristine glory have sometimes gone down to many abuses, why some

so-called orientalists without getting into the spirit of the systems, have indulged in speaking ill of them, sometimes identifying only some portions of the practices (ācāras) with the spirit of the śāstras—for all these historical study is necessary.

With this introduction, let us now discuss in brief Tantras from the historical/traditional point of view. Such discussion will cover problems such as, non-Aryan cum pre-Vedic civilization, Indus Valley Civilization, Astamurti of Siva and Specific charges.

Non-Aryan cum Pre-Vedic Civilization

The question may be raised in this context—what do we exactly mean by 'non-Aryan'? Does it mean something other than 'Aryan', having a distinctive character of its own, or does it mean something barbaric having no culture at all?

Further, is Aryan invasion a historical fact or a fiction? Does the worship of Śiva in its different forms suggest any non-Aryan *cum* non-Vaīdika ingredient in it? Is the concept of Paśupati (and Its worship too) that happens to be one of the eight aspects (aṣta-mūrti) or Śiva Aryan or non-Aryan? It should be mentioned in this connection that the image of Paśupati forms one of the most important religious aspects of the Indus Valley civilization, recently discovered in the archaeological explorations at Mohenjodaro and Harappa. Is this civilization Aryan or non-Aryan? If it is Aryan, is it then purely Vaīdika or otherwise? If it is Vaīdika, can we then say that the present existing Vaīdika civilization of India is a continuation of the Indus Valley civilization? If it is non-Vaīdika or, in other words, non-Aryan *cum* pre-Vaīdika, then the inevitable conclusion stands that the original culture of India is non-Vaīdika or Ágamic (until any fresh discovery could disprove it) and the Vaīdika culture is of later origin. In this context the Aryan invasion is proved to be a fact and not a fiction. The whole question may be posed in the following way:

1. The original culture of India is Ágamika *cum* non-Vaīdika and the Vedic culture came at a later date due to the Aryan invasion in India. Subsequently some of the elements of the Vedic culture, which was in some respects superior to the Ágamika

one, got fused in the existing non-Aryan *cum* non-Vaīdika elements which were also in some respects superior to the Vedic one. Finally there formed a grand synthesis.

It should be noted here that 'a reorientation of faith was necessitated probably by the impact of the Sumero-Dravidian culture of the Indus Valley civilization and the need of cultural expansion beyond the early frontiers of Aryan domination towards the East and the South where tribes of the hills and forests lived and alternately opposed the extension of Aryan influence and imitated Aryan ways of thought and worship.' At this distance of time it is not possible to be positive about Aryan indebtedness to these earlier cultures of the land. It has been conjectured that Yogic meditation, ascetic habit and belief in transmigration may have come from non-Aryan sources as well as the development of the concept of Śiva and later of the Śākta culture.

2. The original culture of India is Vaīdika and subsequent changes are only products of cultural evolution that took place due to the change of material conditions and ways of living in accordance with the laws of social dynamics.

3. There had been two or more cultures existing simultaneously in India and in course of time there has been an amalgam of different cultures, a form of identity *cum* difference. For example, the folk-cults such as of the Śaivas, Bāuls and Nāthas and the Dharma cults existing at present in India and especially in Bengal bear testimony to the fact that 'notwithstanding the social stratification and religious institutionalisation there is an underlying inter-relationship among the folk-cults behind the superficial dis-similarities'.

Like other ancient cultures of the world, tradition shows that the Indian culture has passed through different phases. In social history we find that Brahmanical supremacy was replaced by Kṣatriya domination and the present age is the age of the Vaīsya with Śūdra overtone. Moreover, different foreign invaders had come to India from time to time. They had contributed what was best in them to the composite texture of the existing Indian culture.

Now let us say something about the principal traits of the

Indian culture. Culture is in essence a thing of the mind. It is the spiritual heritage of a race or nation. The Indian culture is distinguished from other cultures by its being primarily value-centric. It is synthetic by its very nature. The spirit of tolerance and accommodation form the basic characteristics of the Indian mind. It pins its faith in the principle of identity without under-estimating the importance of differences.

Culture expresses itself in manners, customs, patterns of beliefs, ways of life, religion, philosophic thinking and so on. Civilization is sometimes measured by the degree of material prosperity a nation or a race has achieved. Hence a nation or a race may be highly civilized from the point of view of its material achievements but may be lacking in cultural, for a culture always presupposes tradition and to form tradition time is required. It should be noted here that we have used the word civilization as the outward expression of mind in terms of material achieve-ments of a nation.

Indian culture or civilization is from its very essence broadly represented by two diverse traditions, if not more—Aryan *cum* Vaīdika and non-Aryan *cum* a-Vaīdika. The term 'a-vaīdika' may be used as a synonym for 'Ágamika *cum* Tāntrika', though the term Veda is sometimes used for both Ágama and Nigama as we have already mentioned.

Finally culture is the consummation of all these traits in a composite form. Religion seems to be the most important and abiding factor of such consummation in the sense that it influences culture to a very great extent, though the two terms (religion and culture) are not identical. Primarily, culture has a leaning towards social *cum* empirical traits whereas religion essentially centres round the unfoldment of spiritual values on the periphery of a society.

A pertinent question may be raised in this context—Is there anything in the present Western or Western-oriented civiliza-tion which can make the trend of human life meaningful? This is the most important problem of the age. Can we lead such spiritual life within the framework of present civilization? This question has dawned on the Indian mind, and there have been attempts to solve it from different points of view. 'A long-drawn

tradition which still bears potentiality, currents and cross-currents of different forces, some abiding patterns of belief born out of dialectics of emotional and conative values, harmony between economic and moral endeavours'—all these have contributed to the formation of the texture of the Indian culture. These things have assumed different forms in different periods of history. But one common unique characteristic which is present in all these phases and which can in no way be ignored is that no civilization can be creative and living unless it is based on spirituality. The present impasse of our modern civilization can be solved by the application of a new method of transforming the said spirituality in consonance with the spirit of the age.

Indus Valley Civilization

To resume our former discussion let us now see, notwithstanding basic differences of some ideas and rituals both in theory and practice between the Vaīdika *cum* Aryan and non-Vaīdika *cum* non-Aryan culture, how much of the Vaīdika characters is noticeable in the antiquity of the relics found in archaeological excavations made during last fifty years at Mohenjodaro and Harappa of the Indus Valley. It should be noted here that in this context we are not going to enter into the polemic if the Indus Valley civilization is to be designated as Vaīdika or non-Vaīdika or, in otherwords, Aryan or non-Aryan, for, sufficient data in different fields and their analysis have not yet been made conclusive. From the religious point of view we are simply stating here some facts which might give us some light about the Vaīdika and the non-Vaīdika elements found in the said excavations.

To call this civilization 'non-Aryan' is to presume the theory of Aryan invasion in India which, we consider, is still a polemic. On the contrary, the said archaeological relics bear a good deal of similarity to the long-standing Aryan culture which were extant there in those days of the hoary past. It should be noted here that the Aryan *cum* Vaīdika culture is not quite distinct from some of the main Ágamika or Tāntrika practices. 'Yoga' (concentration), 'āsanabandha', 'garuḍa' (the vehicle of Viṣṇu), 'conch-shell' (saṁkha), conch bangles (ṣākhā), altars (vedi),

posts (yūpa), Śiva-liṅga (symbol of Śiva), the image of Śiva as Paśupati and seals on similar other finds in the said archaeological discoveries bear testimony to the fact that the Indus Valley civilization is not at least anti-Vaīdika, though the converse too is not impossible. There are different phases of cultural patterns of a particular civilization which alternate in different ages and finally evolve into a full-fledged system covering within itself the history of thought of that period. Similarly, Indian culture had to pass through different phases—Ágamika or Tāntrika *cum* Vaīdika, Jaina, Bauddha and the like. It should be noted here that notwithstanding the basic unity of Indian thought within the six systems of Indian Philosophy (ṣaḍ-darśana) there are differences within them not only in details of the discussion of a particular problem but also in some of the basic concepts. Further, even within a particular system there are differences in the ways of interpretation the different commentators have made. All these show the progressive trend of the Indian mind.

Let us now consider some of the archaeological finds discovered at Mohenjodaro and Harappa excavations. In one of the seals is found 'a splayed eagle with the head turned to the left and seemingly a snake above each wing'. In Vedic religious context, it was perhaps the prototype of 'garuḍa' who, as the vehicle of Viṣṇu, is represented as flying with a snake in his beak.*[1] The numerous seals on which are found figures of the Indian bull or (vṛṣa), the carrier (vāhana) of Śiva. Bull or vṛṣa happens to be contemporaneous with the religious tradition of India. Further, "The water supply of the two cities (Mohenjodaro and Harappa) was obtained from excellently constructed wells with bricklining. Round such well-heads have been found innumerable fragments of mass-produced little clay cups, suggesting that, as in contemporary Hinduism, there was a ritual taboo on drinking twice from the same cup and that each cup was thrown away or smashed up after it had been used".*[2] As regards altars, in a number of houses in the lower town at Lothal, circular and rectangular mud-brick enclosures containing ash,

1. Wheeler, *The Indus Civilization*, 1960, p. 84
2. Piggot, *Pre-historic India*, Pelican ed., pp. 170 and 171

terracotta, triangular cake and painted pottery were found. All these enclosures are found to be fire-altars, used for sacrificial and ritualistic purposes. There are also sacrificial altars with post (yūpa) holes, clarified butter ladles and animal offerings. Moreover, there are painted pots with pictures, suggesting stories of the Pañcarātra (2nd century B.C.). All these show that the proto-historical civilization at Lothal is linked with the classic Hindu culture of the Maūrya age, and there is a clear continuity of tradition from about 2000 B.C. down to the historical period in India. (The above observations about Lothal relics are based on the findings of Sri S. R. Rao, Deputy Director General of Archaeology, Delhi, who was in charge of Lothal excavations.)

Moreover, the writings on the seals found in the said excavations have not yet been properly deciphered. Pandit Mahendra Chandra Kavyatirtha Sankhyarnava of Silchar claims to have interpreted some of the said seals. One of the seals shows two birds sitting on a tree, one of them tasting a fruit while the other is looking on. This appears to be a pictorial representation of the well-known hymn revealed to sage *Dīrghatamā*

'Dvā suparnā sayujā ....
.... abhicākśiti.'

(Ṛ.V.i, 1964-20).

This view, if accepted, would go to prove that the Ṛgveda was extant in those days of antiquity. There are other seals which give different denominations of different coins, e.g. nava nikka (nine niṣkas); *ga-na-ca-ra-na* (3 quarter coins), rajata (a silver coin), donora (dinara) and dharana (gold coins) and so on. These seals and writings on them thus express in Sanskrit or Prākṛta the denominations of some coins such as 'niṣka', 'dinara', 'dharana', 'suvarṇa', 'rajata', 'pala' etc. The coins presumably were used by tradesmen and merchants of the cities. In the opinion of Piggot, "Harappa traders by about 2300 B.C. must have had their resident representatives in Ur and Lagash and other centres of trade, using the characteristic seals on merchandise and documents."[1]

From the religious point of view there is reason to believe

[1] *Ibid*, p. 210

that the Indus Valley culture centres round the worship of Śiva-liṅgas. "Certain large, smooth, cohesive stones unearthed at Mohenjodaro and Harappa were undoubtedly the Liṅgas of those days. The association with worship of Śiva, however, seems probable."*1

As aready mentioned, one of the interesting seals from Mohenjodaro bears a three-faced figure, seated on an Indian throne in 'Kūrmāsana', a yogic pose with outstretched hands with thumbs in front resting on the knees, and surrounded by five or six animals including an elephant and a tiger on the right, a rhinoceros and buffalo on the left and a deer beneath the lower limbs bare and wearing a series of necklaces, probably, ithyphallic and with the head crowned with horn-like decoration which has been identified by Marshall as a prototype of Śiva in the Pāśupata system (M.I.C.I. 52-6, pt.XII, 17). It is worth noting that a unique coin described by Cunningham bears Śiva with three heads coins of the Indo-Scythians and Kushānas, (III 74 pt. fig. 9). It should be noted here that the trimūrti Śiva (with Umā) at Elephanta, Chitor etc. also bear three heads.

As regards the homeland of the Aryans, the point has not yet been finally decided. The scientific research in the West during the last century has failed to settle the issue. It has been shifted from Pamir to Iraque, Kaspian shores, North Poles and other areas. The present trend is to fix it 'anywhere in Europe, e.g. Norway, Germany, Switzerland, Lithuania, Russian Steppe and so on. All these show that presumably we have started from a wrong hypothesis and it may be said in this connection that sometimes volumes are written in defence of 'Agnosticism' but the task becomes easier if the attitude is changed. Similarly, if we had started from the hypothesis that the homeland of the Aryans is somewhere in the East or in Bhāratvarṣa most probably the task would have been easier. But we guess that the said issue has a deeper bearing on the theory of Indo-European culture, sponsored by Maxmuller and followed by Macdonell and Keith and alleged to have been supported by ethnological, philological and religious hypotheses. There is no scope for discussion of the said issue in this work. By the by, it may be

*1 Mackay—The Indus Valley Civilization pp. 77-78.

mentioned in this connexion that ethnologically it has not yet been finally decided as to what was the original 'Aryan type'. Philologically the similarity of sound of some of the basic words should not be taken as the sole guarantee of proving the said hypothesis. Maxmuller's famous equation, viz. Sanskrit Dvaus-Pitar—Greek Zeus-Pater—Latin Jupeter—Old-Norse Tyr, may be a startling discovery of the 19th century in this regard, but this is not adequate for the acceptance of the above hypothesis without doubt. All these have necessary bearing on the 'Aryan invasion of India' which, we consider, is still a polemic as we have already stated.

Astamurti of Siva

Let us now consider the religious side of this problem. Belief in Śiva in the form of Paśupati goes back to those days of antiquity which may be said to be pre-historic in terms of chronology. 'Paśupati' forms part of the eight aspects (aṣṭamūrti) of Śiva. Further, the worship of Śiva spread far and wide, both inside and outside India, in Indo-China, in Indonesia, and particularly in Cambodia where the worship of Śiva in its most concrete and living form is still in vogue.

Śiva is conceived both in its transcendent and immanent aspects, the latter is identified with Śakti, the innermost nature of Śiva. The eight aspects (aṣṭamurti) of Śiva are found in the Ágamas and the Vedas, in Saṁhitās, in the Purānas and also in similar other texts. The immanent aspect of Śiva's Vedic counterpart, Rudra, is found in the 'Śatarudrīya Hymus' of the Yajurveda, in certain passages of the Atharva-vedá (cf VII.87, 1 : XI.2.1) and also as a legend in two of the most important Brāhmanas such as Śatapatha and Saṅkhyāna. The names of the eight aspects of Śiva are as follows : (1) Rudra, (2) Sarva, (3) Paśupati, (4) Ugra, (5) Aśani, (6) Bhava, (7) Mahādeva (Mahāndevah) and (8) Īśāna, representing the different aspects of God of which each is manifested through a visible form (rūpa). Thus fire (agni) became the form of Rudra, the water (apa) of Sarva (all), the plants (oṣadhaya) of Paśupati, air (vāyu) of Ugra, lightning (vidyut) of Aśani, clouds (parjanya) of Bhava, the moon (candramas) of Mahādeva, and the sun (Áditya) of

Īśāna. Thus we find that the eightfold aspect of Śiva is formed in eight ways. (Sa eṣo' ṣṭanāmāstadhā vibito mahān devaḥ)*[1]

In the Purāṇas also are found the eight aspects of Śiva. They are arranged in the following way : (1) Rudra, (2) Bhava, (3) Sarva, (4) Īśāna, (5) Paśupati, (6) Bhīma, (7) Ugra and (8) Mahādeva and His eight bodies (tanavaḥ)—the Sun (Sūrya), Water (Apa), Earth (Mahi), Fire (Vahni), Air (Vāyu), Ether (Ákās), the initiated Brahmana (Dīkṣita Brāhmana), i.e. the Sacrificer (Yajamāna) and the Moon (Soma).*[2]

In the Mahābhārata, the concept of aṣṭa-tanu or aṣṭa-mūrti brings out the immanent aspect of the supreme God, Śiva. The Mahābhārata says :

Bhūr-ādyān sarvabhuvanān=utpādya sadivaukasaḥ
dadhāti devas=tanubhir=aṣṭābhir=yo bibharti ca.*[3]

The Tāntrika ritual (*in* āgamas having more of Śaktaika character) includes the aṣṭa-mūrti puja of Śiva in the eight forms : Sarva (Earth), Bhava (Water), Rudra (Fire), Ugra (Air), Bhīma (Ether), Paśupati (Yajmāna), Īśāna (Sun) and Mahādev (Moon).*[4] The concept of Śiva finds expression in the famous *Mahimnah Stotram* of Paśupādānta, where the eight aspects of Śiva are named as Bhava, Sarva, Rudra, Paśupati, Ugra, Mahādeva, Bhīma and Īśāna with their eight manifestations, the Sun, the Moon, Air, Fire, Water, Space, Earth and Atman (in place of Yajamāna).

Instead of 'Yajamāna' 'Kṣetrajña' or 'Átman', as one of the forms of Śiva, is also mentioned in the Śiva Purāna. The Liṅga Purāna notes that the two are fundamentally identical and that either of them occurs naturally with different authorities as forms of Śiva. The commentator on the *Mahimnah Stotram* also points out that according to Yogvāśiṣṭha the self (Átman) is called the sacrificer (Yajamāna). It should be noted here that in the exposition of Śākta Philosophy by M. M. Gopinath Kaviraja he has stated : "Śiva and Śakti are conceived as con-

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1 Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts* IV, pp. 322 ff, 333, 334 f, 339 f, 343 f.

2 *Padma-Purana*, Srsti-khanda, Ch, II 197 ff ; *Markandeya-Purana*, Ch. 52, 2 ff, *Visnu-Purana* 1, viii, 2 ff ; *Saura-Purana*, Ch. 23,

3 *Mahabharata*, Anusasana-parva, Ch. 16. V. 34

4 Todala tantra, patala 5

stituting the two aspects of one and the same Divine Principle, inalienably associated and essentially identical. Śiva is the agent, Śakti as the instrument; the one is transcendent, the other immanent. The cosmic manifestation of Śakti is however in essence, the manifestation of Śiva Himself conceived as immanant."*[1] It should further be noted here that from the point of view of manifestation Śiva cannot even be conceived of as other than Śakti. The Aṣṭa-tanu concept of Śiva finds prominence in the works of Kālidāsa, viz. Abhijñāna-Śakuntalam, Mālavikāgnimitram and Kumārasambhavam (cf. I. 57 ; VI. 26).

In Southern India, the concept of Aṣṭamūrti finds profuse expression in the devotional hymns composed by the Tāmil Śaiva saints. But the idea can be traced back to a much earlier epoch, viz. that represented by Sangam literature. In the Tāmil epic, 'Manimekhalai' of that age, mentions are made of Saivādin, who propounds the doctrine Īśvara, having eight forms such as, two lights (sun and moon), the doer and the five elements.*[2]

Saint ManikkaVacagar gives expression to the concept of the Aṣṭamūrti of Śiva in his Tiruvācagam : "Earth, water, air, fire, sky, the sun and the moon, the sentient man—these eight forms He pervades". Appara and Sambandha, however, mentioned, instead of 'the sentient man' or the self, the 'sacrificer'.*[3]

In Indian Iconographic texts, the eight aspects of Śiva such as Bhava, Sarva, Īśāna, Paśupati, Ugra, Rudra, Bhīma and Mahādeva are grouped under the collective name of Mūrtyaśṭaka', which are represented in sculpture and set up in Śiva temples. But Gopinath Rao observes that there actually exists no sculptured representation of the group" "at least in any of the South Indian temple".*[4] Nor is it known if any such representation exists in any other part of India. The concept is, however, quite well known in the ritual and plan of Hindu temple architecture. "The following are involved and beheld in

1 In *History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western*, Allen & Unwin, Vol. I, pp. 401 ff

2 S. Krishnaswami Aianger, *Manimekhalai in Its Historial Settings*, Luzac & Co., p. 192

3 J. M. Nallasvami Pillai, *Studies in Saiva Siddhanta*, pp. 101-3

4 Gopinath Rao, *Hindu Iconography*, Vol II, pt. II, pp. 403 ff

the bricks, when a temple of Śiva is built; the subtle body of eight components apportioned to man (puryaṣṭaka); the eight-fold manifestations of Śiva (aṣṭamūrti); the pure principles, and all the other principles (tattva) and forms of manifestation including the impure principles of the world of duality."

From what has been stated above it would appear that the concept of the eight forms (Aṣṭamūrti or Aṣṭatanu) of Śiva can be traced as far back as the Vedic literature (if not in pre-Vedic?) and later in the Brāhmanas and Purāṇas, embracing in its fully developed form. The philosophical idea that the sacrificer (Yajamāna) is the self (Átman) as manifest later. The Indian concept already in its finalised shape spread to the Hinduised countries of Indo-China and Indonesia. It is found in the Sanskrit epigraphic record of the ancient kingdom of Kambuja (Cambodia) from the 7th century onwards.

The foregoing observation of some of the facts of cultural history of India reveals that the ancient culture of India is basically Śaiva; the Vaīdika and non-Vaīdika elements are essentially matters of religious practices, discipline, mode of worship and goals of the two streams. The goal of the yajna-centric elaborate ritualism of the Vedas is to invoke and propitiate different gods and goddesses through incantation and proper accentuation of the *mantras* and thereby to achieve *svarga,* an abode of perpetual bliss and joy, whereas the other stream aims at gaining perfection and fullness of life through psychical, physical and spiritual discipline and practices (sādhanā) and finally going beyond the natural and achieving a state of transcendence, otherwise designated as Freedom.

While winding up the above discussion of the "Tantras in Historical Retrospect" let us state below some of the charges that are usually labelled against the Tantras and show if such charges are justifiable or not.

Specific charges

(i) The Tantras are not ancient authentic religious scriptures of the Aryan race and they as religious scriptures are not acceptable throughout India. This so-called Ścripture or Śāstra is the creation of the Bengalees and its injunctions have been in

practice only in Bengal (Gauḍa). Further, the Bengalees are believers of self-determination (svātantrya) and have full confidence in their own strength, and the Tantras propound precisely such attitude of life.

(ii) Amongst the Mahāyāna Buddhists worship of Deities such as Tārā, Vajrayoginī, Kṣetrapāla and others has been in vogue and there are in Mahāyāna Buddhism mantras, vījas and japas specifically prescribed for propitiating the same. So if in the Hindu Tantras there are similar gods and goddesses worshipped and specific mantras, vījas and japas for the said gods and goddesses, Hindu Tantra must have originated from the Mahāyāna sect of Buddhism.

(iii) The aboriginal tribes in India are worshippers of śakti (Power), spirits, ghosts, serpents, trees and the like and such practices are found in the tradition of Tāntrika worship. Hence the tantras owe their origin to the so-called barbaric tradition.

As against the first charge it may be said that it is unwarranted and not based on historical facts. The influence of the Tāntrika tradition is to be found not only in Bengal but throughout India. It may be mentioned in this context that just as higher castes of the Bengalees are divided into different religious sects such as Śākta, Vaīṣaṇava and Śaiva, similar is the case with the people of Kāmarūpa, Mithilā, Utkala, Kaliṅga and the pandits of Kāśmīra. The aforesaid religious sects fall within the five-fold worshippers (pancopāsakas) recognised in the Tantras. It should be noted here that the mantras of those sects are primarily Tāntrika. In the Southern part of India (Dākṣinātya) there are many pandits, such as M. M. Subramanya Shāstri amongst others, who are initiated in Śakti mantra and hence belong to the Śākta fold. Likewise, the late M.M. Rāma Misra Shāstri, M. M. Rāma Shāstri Bhāgavatācarya and many others belong to the Vaīṣṇava fold. Shivakumar Shāstri and many others are Saivas. The great Rāmaṅujācārya and Mādhvācārya are devout Vaīṣaṇavas. In Vrindavana there are many Śākta and Vaiṣṇava Brahmins, though amongst higher castes in Maharashtra and other South Western States, Śaivas and Vaīṣṇavas are more numerous than the Śāktas. The followers of Pāśupata and Jaṅgama cults are Śaivas. Further, in the north-west sector

of India many are initiated in the 'Rāma mantra' and Rāma mantra is found only in the Tantra. It is more interesting that the priests of Kāmākhyā Devī are all Vaiṣṇavas. All these show that the charge that Tantra is of Bengal origin and is not acceptable as it is not based on facts. More about this will be discussed later on.

The second charge that Tantras follow Mahāyāna Buddhism is also not acceptable from historical/traditional point of view. The argument placed in favour of this statement is as follows : because in the Buddhist Tantras of the Mahāyāna sect we find the worship of Tārā, Hāyagrīva, Vajrayoginī, Kṣetrapāla and other gods and goddesses and because the worship of similar deities together with corresponding mantras, vījas and japas is also found in the Hindu tantras, therefore, the latter is derived from the former. The basis of this argument is that similarity of some of the religious practices in the field of worship between two religious cults implies that one is derived from the other. This is a bad analogy. First of all, it could be said alike, on the same basis of religious practices in the field of worship, that the Mahāyāna school of Buddhism owes its origin to the Hindu Tantras. The question may be reasonably raised in this context that if the Hindu mind was moved, drawn and attracted by the touching teachings of the Buddhism, why it should concern itself with the externals of Buddhism only and not with the fundamental tenets of the Buddhist religion. Why, in other words, should the Hindus, instead of striving for Baūddha Nirvāna, stand before Buddhist deities and with folded palms pray for beauty, victory, glory and destruction of foes? Further, there is a great difference between the yoga undertaken for the extinction of all desires and the yoga practised with a view to the acquisition of power, wealth and destruction of foes.* It may

* It is true that in a particular type of Tantrika Sādhanā there is a provision for practices (kriya) alleged to be malefic, such as marana, ucatana, vasikarana and stambhavana, otherwise called abhicara ; but it is specifically stated in the Tantras that in no circumstances should such practices be directed or motivated towards the satisfaction of any selfish end. Tantras, being primarily of practical and realistic nature, provide such practices as guard against evil doers and doings. Further, the said practices have no physical bearing, they work only in the psychical region.

be mentioned here that *Bhagavadgītā* preaches niṣkāma karma (right to work only and not to the fruits thereof) which might lead to the acquisition of Knowledge akin to Bauddha Nirvāna. Can anybody say on this account that the teachings of *Bhāgavadgītā* are influenced by Buddhist ideas? Further, in the Tantras there is a provision for sakāma karma (work with some object in view i.e. for power, wealth, beauty, etc.), and this is contrary to the spirit of Buddhism. Moreover, Hinduism, of all religions, provides different forms of religious practices for persons having different dispositions and competences (adhikāra). This also does not fit in with the principles and practices of Buddhism. In the above context, how is it possible then to account for and explain Śākya-Muni's renunciation (vaīrāgya), his loss of faith in Hinduism and his discovery of the new path whereby man shall escape infirmities of old age and death and achieve final extinction of sorrows in line with the practices of the Tantras ?

It is true that in Buddhism, out of pity for all living creatures, sacrifice of animals is forbidden; but it is an astonishing fact that Tantrism has ordained sacrifice of goats, buffaloes and other animals before the altars of gods and goddesses. If there is anything in Buddhism which might prove attractive to human minds in general, it is its prohibition against slaughter of animals—an ordinance which melted the hearts of a large number of men, including Hindus, and made them Buddhists. It is hardly probable then that Hinduism should omit that portion of Buddhism which is fundamentally attractive to human hearts and accept some external forms which do not fit in with the fundamental tenets of Buddhism, especially the concept of Nirvāṇa. Let us now state some of the instances of animal sacrifice performed in sacrificial rites of the Hindus in those days of antiquity. In the great sacrificial rites (yajña) which lasted a hundred years, Saūnaka and other Ṛṣis used to listen to the recitation of *Srimad-Bhāgvat* from the mouth of Sūta and they used to sacrifice animals there. In the Aśvamedha-yajña (horse sacrifice) which King Yudhiṣṭhira performed under the guidance of Kṛṣṇa a horse was killed and offered to the deities*. Kṛṣṇa himself hunted

***Srimad-Bhagavata ;* Sk. I

a boar under the command of Vasudeva for the satisfaction of the Pitṛs in a srāddha ceremony. The eleventh Skandha of *Srīmad-Bhāgavat* explicitly states that killing of animals in Yajña is no killing in the ordinary sense ; it is a sort of sacrifice of the ego and ego-centre disposition.

To resume the former discussion, it may be mentioned that many of the Vaiśyas of Mathurā were converted to Buddhism and some of them to Jainism. Subsequently, being greatly moved at the sight of Caitanya and listening to his preachings of love for Kṛṣṇa, they were drawn to Hinduism. First they felt some hesitation to return to the Hindu fold, on the ground that in Hinduism slaughter of animals in different yajñas was almost mandatory. It was perhaps at that time that the Vaiṣṇava teachers were preaching that killing of animals was not a necessity for their cult, and in that way they succeeded in converting the Buddhists and Jains to their faith. Probably it was from then that the Vaiṣṇava families abandoned animal sacrifice on the occasion of the Pūjā ceremonies. All these reasonably demonstrate that the Buddhist teachers, in addition to their own codes, grafted from Hinduism some of the practices of worshipping different gods and goddesses together with vījas and mantras and called themselves Māhāyana Buddhists—a sect which came into existence long after the passing away of Buddha. Further, it may be mentioned here that in *Lalita-vistāra,* the biography of Śākyasimha, it is stated that Buddha was well conversant with Nigama, Purāṇas, Itihāsa and the Vedas. When both Veda and Nigama are mentioned in the same context, the latter term refers to Tantras which go by both the names āgama and nigama. Then how is it possible to maintain that the Hindu Tantras originate from the Mahāyāna sect of Buddhism when Buddha himself in his lifetime has explicitly referred to Nigama vis-a-vis Tantra ?

Again, Śākya-simha is said to have addressed the Bhikṣus thus : "There are fools who seek protection of, and pay obeisance to Brahmā, Indra, Rudra, Viṣnu, the Devī, Kārtikeya, Mother Kātyāyanī, Ganapati and others. Some perform tapasyā (ascetic practices) in the cremation ground and at the crossing of four roads." Speaking of the practices of heretics, he had

once mentioned the use of wine and flesh which is practised in some special form of Tāntrika sādhanā. Had not the Tāntrika form of worship been in existence before the advent of Śākya-muni (Buddha), how could he have known and referred to them?* In fine, it may be said that the strength of the aforesaid analogical argument depends on the fundamental points of agreement between the Tantras on the one hand and Buddhism on the other; but no such agreement or similarity is found between them save and except some superficial points in regard to the worship of some of the gods and goddesses. Even in that context, it may be said that there are cases where similarity of the vīja mantra between the said two systems is lacking, as in the case of the Goddess Nīla-Sarasvatī, accepted both in the Bauddha and Tāntrika systems. In spite of these fundamental differences between Buddhism and Tantrism one might imagine that both Buddhism and Tantrism grew on the soil of India and it was not improbable that in the process of cultural synthesis, especially in the field of religious practices, there was mutual exchange of ideas, quite as much as we find a good deal of similarity in the subsequent periods of history between Sahajayāna, Mantrayāna, Nātha and Sahajiyā cults of Buddhism on the one hand and Śaivism on the other.

Against the third objection stated before one may ask—who are those persons called barbarian aboriginals? Were such aboriginals Dravidians, Oḍras and Paūṇḍrakas, should we suppose that Bengalee pandits composed the Tāntra Śāstra in imitation of the practices of the Dravidians inhabiting the distant south? Or should we suppose that the Tāntrika systems were adopted from the Mundas, Santhals, Garos, Meches, Kuches, Khasias and the primitive inhabitants of Assam? But this is absurd, for the concept of Śakti in different forms is found in almost every literary work of India—in the Vedas, Saṁhitās, Upaniṣads, Mahābhārata, Purānas and in other literatures. Moreover, the Goddess of Śakti in different forms is worshipped throughout India—in Kamakhya, Vindhya hills, Kasi, Vrindavana, Rajasthan, Tirhut, Haridwar and so on. Historical survey of the religious practices prevalent in those days of ancient India

*Lalitavistara XI, Ch. V, Sl. XIII

does not support the view that because Tantra advocates the practice of Śakti, therefore it is of recent origin and that the advocates of this Śāstra are Bengalees.

Sometimes it is said that *Yogini Tantra* is of recent origin and at most only three hundred years old. But presumably this is not a correct assessment of the age of *Yogini Tantra*. As against such assessment it can be mentioned that Raghunandana Bhaṭṭācārya, the great smārta, and Kṛṣṇānanda Bhaṭṭāchārya Ágamavāgīśa, contemporary of Śrī Caītanya, have in their works *Smrti-tattva* and *Tantra-sāra* quoted and referred to *Yoginī Tantra* as an authentic work on the Tantras. There are scholars, again who are of opinion that because the term 'tantra' is not specifically mentioned in the 'Svarga-varga' of Amarakoṣa Tantra is not to be considered as any authentic scripture. But it should be noted that the names of some of the other ancient scriptures too, such as 'Atharva-Veda', have not been mentioned there. Those scholars have not noticed also that in the nānārtha-varga of the said work there is a mention of 'Ágama-śāstra' another name of which is 'Tantra'.

Mādhavācārya, the commentator of the Vedas, has in dealing with the Pātañjala system in his compilation of different systems of Indian philosophy, named *Sarva-Darśana-Samgraha* **quoted** many passages from the 'Tantra Sastras' particularly with reference to what is called tenfold disposition (daśavidha saṁskāra). Vācaspati Miśra, the great commentator of the six systems of Indian philosophy has in his commentary on the Pātañjala system spoken of the practice of meditation (dhyāna) as of Tāntrika origin. Śrīmat-Śaṁkarācārya has in his Śarīraka-Bhāsya mentioned the determination of six bodily centres (śaṭcakras) of the Tantras. It is hardly necessary to say that none of the three great Ácāryas is a Bengalee. Further, before the compilation of Kṛṣṇānada's Tantra Sāra there had been many compilers of Tantras such as Rāghavānanda, Rāghava Bhatta, Virupāksa, Govinda Bhatta to mention only a few. Kṛṣṇananda in his observation upon the goddess Nīla·Sarasvati, in his 'Tantra-Sāra', says 'said by even Śaṁkarācārya'. The famous Hymns of Śākti such as *Ananda-lahari* and Daksiṇāmūrti-stotra are works of Śaṁkarācārya.

Besides, there are many important compilations of Tantras such as *Rāmārcanā-candrikā,** *Mantra-Muktāvalī, Sāra-Saṃgraha, Bhuvanesvari-pārijāta, Sārādā-tilaka, Tripurā-Sivasamuccaya, Svacchanda-saṃgraha, Sāra-samuccaya, Mantra-tantra-prakāsa* and others. These compilations were prepared long before the time of Kṛṣṇananda and Raghunandana.

Further, the argument that Tantraśāstra is of recent origin because it provides for the worship of Śakti is applicable *mutatis mutandis* to the cases of the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas also. The Devīsūkta (10th Maṅḍala) and the Lakṣmīsūkta of the Ṛgveda and the Sarasvatīsūkta of the Yajurveda are instances in this regard. Readers of the Cḥāndogya and other Upaniṣads are aware of the incident in which Umā, the daughter of the Mountain, riding on a lion in a blaze of light, appeared before Indra and other gods in order to prove that it was not by their own power that they lived and moved, it was Mahāśakti by virtue of which every thing is done. The Mahābhārata contains hymns in honour of Devī Śakti in many places. The Purāṇas are replete with innumerable instances of the glory of the Goddess. The Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇa relates the greatness of the Devī, Skanda-Purāṇa, Brahma-Purāṇa, Brahma-Vaīvarta-Purāṇa, Bhaviśya-Purāṇa, Padma-Purāṇa, Devi-Purāṇa and Kālikā-Purāṇa are full of praises for the Devī Śakti and recommend appropriate worship.

In addition to the above, it may be further stated that in the Śanti Parva of the Mahābhārata (Ślokas 7-8-9 of the 259th chapter) Yudhisthira enquired of Bhīsma about Mokṣa-dharma. In reply Bhisma said that in the Vedas different forms of worship are contemplated according as different persons having each of their respective capacity and predispositions. The words of the Vedas are true and from the words of the Vedas have come 'all-embracing Vedas'. Here the term all-embracing Vedas stands for the Tantras. Further, in the said Santi-Parva Mahādeva speaks to Dakṣa, of a Pāśupata-vrata which belongs to the Tantrika system. In the same Parva the name of

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* Passages from Ramarcana-candrika have been quoted by Vacaspati Misra (Jr.) in the chapter of Vasanti Puja in his *Krtya-cintamani* This proves the antiquity of the Tantra.

the Pañcarātra is mentioned and Pañcarātra is an important text of the Vaiṣṇava Tantra. As against the charge that Tantra-śāstra is of recent origin, we may refer to an incident stated in the Śānti Parva of the Mahābhārata. In the satya-yuga Rudra, engrossed in Yoga, revealed Tantra-śāstra to the Bālakhilya Ṛṣis, but those revelations were lost due to the influence of Māyā-Śakti of Rudra. Subsequently, those revelations appeared in a reoriented form. Rāmānuja in *Sri Bhasya* uses, in the context of Pañcarātra Tantra, the expressions such as, 'Elucidated by Nārāyana Himself' and again, he has not mentioned the cults of Yoga and Pāśupata in the context of non-vedic offerings and practices. He writes 'Sāṁkhya, Yoga, the Pañcarātra, the Vedas and the Pāśupata are considered as self-evident and cannot be disproved by reasoning.' Sūta-Saṁhitā forms part of Brahmagītā. Brahmā is the speaker there, the subject matter is Saṁkara and the commentator is Mādhavācārya. He has stated at the end of each chapter of the said commentary, "Árya Mādhavācārya, an inhabitant of Kāśi, a devotee of Śakti in action, a servant of the lotus feet of the three-eyed Deva and illuminator of the path of the Upaniṣads."

There are many commentaries on the Nṛsiṁha Tapaniya Upaniṣad, one of which is written by Bhagavān Saṁkarācārya and another by his great Preceptor (Parama Guru) Gaūḍāpādacārya known by the name of Munīndra. Kulluka Bhatta, the author of the most authoritative commentary on *Manu Samhitā*, has in his note on the 1st śloka of chapter II quoted a passage from the work of Hārita which reads—"Now we shall explain Dharma. Dharma is based on the authority of Śruti. Śruti is of two kinds—Vaidika and Tāntrika."

Tantra-śāstra is in some authoritative works referred to by the terms Rahasya (mysticism), and Vidyā (Meta-Science) in addition to Ágama and Nigama which last, again, is in some context used in lieu of the Vedas. (cf. 165th sloka, chapter II of Manusaṁhitā; 16th sloka of the IVth Brāhmana in the IInd varga of Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad)

In the Vṛddha Hārita Saṁhitā a full account of the Tāntrika form of initiation (dīkṣā) is given. The Uṣanah-Saṁhitā makes a clear reference to the aforesaid Pañcarātra and Pāśupata

Dharma. The Vyāsa-Saṁhitā recommends japa of the Guhya-vidyā and worship of Rudra together with Gāyatrī. It should be noted here that probably Gāyatrī for Rudra and similar other Gods (Devatās) can be found in the Tantras. In the Vṛddha-Gautama-Saṁhitā there is a list of the names of the authors of Dharmaśāstra. In this list is found the names of Brahmā, Umā and Maheśvara. Like the Purāṇas, the Smṛtis and the Saṁhitās refer directly or indirectly to the Tantra, but in the Tantra there is no such reference either to Smṛti or to Purāṇas. All these reasonably show the great antiquity of the Tantras. There is a great Tāntrika scripture called 'Sivāgama'. One of its commentators is the great Abhinava Gupta, the propounder of Kāśmīra Śaivism, otherwise called Pratyabhijñā. Kṛṣṇānanda in his *Tantrasāra* has quoted some of the sūtras of the said Ágama as authoritative. This shows affinity between Kāśmīra Pratyabhijñā and Śāktādvaītavāda prevalent in the eastern region of India.

Now let us conclude this section by citing some of the representative opinions about the Tantras and by stating some of the main characteristics of the same. Professor Masaharu Auzaki in his 'History of Religion in Ancient India', after citing 'Rāja Taraṅginī' as evidence of Tāntrika worship at the time of Aśoka (240 B.C.), says that without doubt Tantra began to appear even before Nāgārjuna (200 A.D.) and that in absorbing Buddhism it has been successful despite all efforts to the contrary. In fact, as regards Buddhism, Tantra stands for a Hindu conquest. Further, in 'Tārā-Tantra' it is stated that Buddha and Vaśiṣtha were Tāntrika seers and 'Kulabhairavas'. Professor Heyman Wilson says that the Tāntrika tradition is not the work of a day, it has a long history behind it. Creation, maintenance and dissolution, propitiation of gods and goddesses, religious *cum* spiritual practices, puraścaraṇa, Sat karma, dhyāna, yoga and similar other practices have been discussed in the Tantras. (See Varāhī-Tantra). Professor Cowell says that the Tantras form a branch of literature highly esteemed, though at present much neglected. Professor Sir Monier Williams in his *Indian Wisdom* has mentioned about Tantras and has spoken ill of

them though some of his findings are supposed to be not properly presented.

Some Main Characteristics of the Tantras

(1) First of all, Tantraśāstra is meant for all classes irrespective of caste, creed and sex. In this system sex is no bar against spiritual initiation. It is stated in the Tantras that, far from Vaidika exclusiveness, the practice of family tradition is essential for all two-footed beings. By family is meant persons coming from a particular specific stock and tradition in this context consists of some long-standing practices both in the social and the spiritual.

(2) Tantra-sāstra affords to all freedom to be engaged in spiritual practice according to one's competence and shows the practical method which would qualify the spiritual aspirant (sādhaka) to proceed along the higher path of knowledge (jñāna-mārga)—knowledge in terms of experience as distinguished from intellectual theorising alone. Tantra is above all a meta-science, primarily concerned with the performance of rituals aiming at liberation, for, according to Tantra, not only theorising but also practice in proper direction is indispensable for gaining experience and freedom.

(3) Tantra-śāstra is primarily a Sādhana-śāstra, and in almost all religions spiritual practice (sadhanā) is recognised. The Catholic Church, rich with the experience of ages and clothed in splendour, has introduced mantras, dhūpa, ācamana, vādya, dīpa, bell, flowers etc., in their method of worship. The Protestants also admit some kind of religious practices (sādhanā). The great teachings of the Vedānta by itself can achieve nothing of real worth. It needs intense contemplation (nididhyāsana), a sort of sādhanā to gain right knowledge. The Tantra claims to be thoroughly practical in the sense that it affords direct proof of spiritual practices. It should be noted here that Tantra bears great affinity with the art of medicine (bhaiṣajya) in so far as its practical outlook is concerned.

It should further be noted that, apart from primarily practical and realistic attitude of the Tantras, the rational side of this grand system is well-developed. Tantra believes in the right and competency (adhikāra and yogyatā) of the spiritual aspirants.

The sacramental energy of the mantra, even when the spiritual preceptor (guru) has vivified it with consciousness, depends in part for its efficacy on the competence of the aspirant who receives it. Tantra believes in different stages of spiritual progress such as japa, dhyāna, bhāva and Brahma-sādhanā which last is the highest state of mind. It should be noted here that for the Brahmajñāni (one who has realised Brahma) there is no difference of these stages.

Tantra is vehemently opposed to any sort of lifeless, mechanical formality. It is pointedly stated in the Tantras that if the rubbing of the body with mud and ashes be a means to gain liberation then village dogs could get it.

The way of liberation according to the Tantras is tattvajñāna or intellectual conviction of the tattvas. Formal discussion for thousands of years of what is knowledge or what is knowable would not fetch the knowledge of Brahman. As the goose is capable of distinguishing milk from the water mixed with it, so the real extract or essence of the scriptures is to be found out. Knowledge derived from the Āgamas leads to Śabda-Brahman or the theory of Logos but that which issues from discriminative knowledge (vivekajñāna) is the knowledge of Para-Brahman. According to the Tantras there is no realization proper with any sort of attachment to rites, be they vāīdika or āgamika, however, much such rites may be necessary as preliminary steps to the realization.

Knowledge of the Brahman cannot be attained without self-purification, and for such self-purification Tantra provides means, taking cognizance of the spirit of the age (kāla-dharma). The knowledge of which Tantra-śāstra speaks is not only knowledge within the empirical bounds of waking consciousness but also spiritual experience constituting the fourth stage, i.e. *turīya* state of consciousness, through the practice of yoga. Haṭhayoga and various forms of spiritual training have been admitted in the Tantras. Both popular and esoteric Hinduism in practical aspects are largely Tāntrika. Tantra as the *mantra* and the sādhana-śāstras affords us different types of the *mantras* and their significance and the practical śādhanā of various types such as physical, psychical and spiritual. The spirit of the Hindu

mind, Hindu ideas, philosophy and religion, can be properly understood through discipline and practices which are mainly Tāntrika.

The question may be raised here as to why the Tantras have gone to so much abuses when two thirds of Hindu religious rites and half of Hindu medicine (bhaiṣajya) are Tāntrika ?

The following causes amongst others may be cited :—During the latter part of the 18th century Christian missionaries as religious preachers came to India to preach Christianity. They utterly neglected Hindu ceremonialism.[1] In addition, it became very difficult to get the real type of the Tantras. There are many who are of opinion that the Tantras are primarily Śādhana-śāstras and hence 'gupta vidyā' or secret knowledge. Such knowledge was kept within a very limited group called spiritual preceptors and the records which are available are of fragmentary character, and that also in the manuscript form. Hence Tantra-śāstra remained beyond the reach of ordinary seekers for a considerable period of time. Moreover, the highly technical character of the significant terms used in the Tantras and complex and esoteric character of rituals stood as a bar between the true import of the Tantras and people in general. Professor De la Valle Poussin remarks in the context of the Buddhist Tantra that the essential concepts of the Tantras are of metaphysical and subtle character. This remark is also applicable to the case of the Hindu-Tantra. For instance, the significance of Śakti-tattva, Mantra-tattva, Yoga-tattva, the principle of of Kuṇḍaline, Bīja-mantra and the like is of a highly subtle, metaphysical and esoteric character.

Besides, the technical terms or concepts such as 'yantra', 'mantra', 'mudrā', 'nyāsa', 'sādhanā', 'upāsanā', 'yoga' (of different kinds) 'panca-tattva' and 'ṣaṭ-cakra', used in the Tantras and practised by the sādhakas, demonstrate the technical character of the Tantras. The Tantras at present are available in Indian scriptures, and also in Chinese and Tibetan records.

As regards Varṇāśrama (varṇa denotes four classes such as Brāhmin, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra; āśrama=brahmacārya,

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[1] Harold Bugby, *The Light of Asia*, p. 148

gārhasthya, vānaprastha and sannyāsa), the view of the Tantras is well expressed in the following statement:

In the Āgama-saṁhitā Śiva Himself has said that those who disregard the Varṅāśarama dharma (Oh, Goddess Sureśvari !) and offer us blood, flesh and wine, get turned into ghosts, spirits, demons and brahmarākśasas. It should be noted here that the Tantras do believe in svabhāva dharma—in other words, Kaūla dharma, —and in spiritual practice it lays special stress on adhikāra based on tradition.

Confirmed by the relics of the Indus Valley civilization found in the archaeological exploration at Mohenjodaro and Harappa (stated) and other ancient scriptures, the aforesaid dissertations conclusively prove the antiquity and authenticity of the Tantra. In fine it may be said that the Tantra is of divine origin, realized and realizable in super-sensuous experience of the yogins, practised by sādhakas (spiritual aspirants) and expressed in manners, customs and religious behaviour of the Hindus through age-old tradition. Further, Tantra forms an essential part of the dynamic aspect of Indian culture. Both in philosophic speculation and religious practices, it exhibits that spiritual renunciation (niḥśreyas) and material progress (abhyudaya) go side by side in the history of Indian thought and art of living. In this system an attempt is made to bridge the gulf between matter and spirit.

CHAPTER II

TANTRA : TATTVA-MANTRA-KALA, . . .

There are persons alleged to be orientalists who talk about Tantras so glibly and in such a strain that the term Tantra stands, as if for all conceivable evils embedded in the basal side of human nature. There are others who identify Tantra with black magic, full of obscenities, mummaries and vain speculation. There are still others who characterise Tantra as the 'scriptures of the Śāktas' 'secret writings of the Hindus', 'collection of the magical treatises', 'description of the mystic rites of an undedicated character.'

While defining Tantra in its proper perspective we shall see how those people labour under gross misconception about a subject which is held by the people of India in great esteem, the subject which has a command over three fourths of the religious beliefs of the Hindus and plays an important role in the fields of physical, psychical and spiritual realization. Moreover, Tantra has its important contributions in Indian art, architecture, literature, astronomy, astrology etc., and particularly Hindu medicine (vaīṣajya) owes much to the Tantras.

The term 'tantra' is used both in singular and plural. Outwardly the term denotes injunctions (niyama) and regulations (vidhi) and essentially it connotes the nature of being revealed and revealing at the same time. Logically speaking, the injunctions of the Tantras are considered as regulative ideas working as corrective of undue speculation. Spiritually, they are some experience-concepts, realisable in terms of revelation of the mysteries of men and matters. Ethically, they are said to be directive principles helping to formulate what is good and what is bad in the social context. So long as there is a world to live in and consciousness with which to know and survive, the Tantras in the aforesaid sense shall remain in some form or other. In a different sense Tantra denotes the different religious sects such as *Saiva, Sakta, Vaisnava, Saura* and *Ganapatya,* otherwise called *Pancopasakas* and each of their respective religious practices (ācāras) and disciplines (niyamas) and connote the essential

nature of being spiritual and gaining power of ascendency towards Absolute Fullness and Perfection in terms of Freedom, otherwise called *Siva* as 'I in Full' through different grades of consciousness as power and experiential possession. It is some sort of grand synthesis of the static and dynamic, i.e., of pure self as consciousness and the potentiality of life in its fullness.

Now let us see what we exactly mean by the term 'tantra'. Tantra-śāstra is generally considered as religious scriptures of the Hindus embodying principles which denote injunction and regulation. Thus Saṁkara calls Sāṁkhya a Tantra. Moreover, any secular writings may be designated as Tantra. In the present context, the term 'tantra' has been used in a special sense, and as a result the term 'tantra' is defined in the following way.

Definition

The term 'tantra' has been derived in *Kasika-vrtti* (7.2.9) from the root *tan* i.e., to spread (vistāra) by the *annadika rule 'Sarvadhatubhyastran'* with the addition of the suffix *'strana'*. Vācaspati, Govindānanda and Ánanda Giri, however, *derive* the word from *'tatri'* or *'tantri'* in the sense of *'vyutpadana'* i.e., origination in terms of knowledge. In *Ganapata*, '*Tantri*' has the same meaning as 'tan' i.e., to spread, and it is, therefore, probable that the former rule has the modification of the latter. The meaning of the term 'vyutpādana', i.e., origination, is also probably derived by narrowing the general sense of vistāra, i.e., to spread, which is the meaning of the root '*tan*'. Hence the derivative meaning of the term 'tantra' is said to be that which helps spreading or expanding what is latent in the individual through jñāna or consciousness in terms of knowledge as transcendental act—'Tanyate vistāryate jñānam anena iti tantram'. Here consciousness in terms of awareness is not simply passive reproduction of mind but also of the nature of intuitive intellection embodying spontaneous act. The aforesaid suffix '*tra*' means '*trana*', i.e., to save, and hence the aim of Tantra is to spread that kind of knowledge which saves individual selves from suffering and helps them to receive Divine Grace. In other words it may be said that Tantra means a particular kind of religious scripture, the main object of which is to spread such awareness

and act by following and practising which, one can realise his own essential nature of Śivahood and thereby attain freedom from worldly limitations.

In *Kamika-Agama* of the Southern School of Saivism, Tantra is characterised in the following way :-

'Tanoti vipulaṁ artham tattva-mantra-samanvitam; trananca kurute yasmāt tantram ityabhidhiyate'. In this characterisation of the Tantra three terms such as 'artha', 'tattva' and 'mantra' are significant. Artha=object=that which is referred to or meant; about tattva and mantra, (cosmic principles and cosmic sound respectively), we shall discuss here a bit.

Tattvas

Tattvas or cosmic principles denote different grades of the universe or universes. Experience, according to the Tantra, consists of bhuvanas (universes) and planes of life and consciousness made up of tattvas. In the Tantras (Śaiva-Śākta systems of thought specially) thirty-six tattvas are recognised. In the ultimate analysis these tattvas owe their origin to the alogical-integral-synthetic-whole of experience otherwise called Supreme Locus where Śiva=Existence and Śakti=Consciousness stay in perfect unison of non-separateness. The aforesaid thirty-six tattvas are divided into three groups such as physical, psychical and spiritual. Counting from below upwards, there are twenty-four tattvas, similar to those of Sāṁkhya, with prakṛti (sattva, rajas and tamas in a state of equilibrium) standing at the peak and evolving from out of itself the inner instruments (antakaraṇas) such as buddhi, ahaṁkāra and manas. It should be noted here that, unlike Sāṁkhya, in the Tantra prakṛti is not one but many corresponding to many puruṣas. Beyond prakṛti stands puruṣa (individual self) subject to five limitations otherwise called kancukas, such as kalā, rāga, vidyā, kāla and niyati, originating from māyā, otherwise called kārya-māyā. These subjective limitations together with māyā are called ṣaṭ-kañcukas in the Tantra. The above thirtyone principles (twenty-four prakṛti-tattvas +the puruṣa-tattva +six principles of subjective limitation) form the physico-vital *cum* psychical planes of the universe. It should be noted here that it is due to

the influence of māyā (kārya-māyā) that the world appears as illusory and other than Śiva, though in reality it is not so *other*, the world being full of Śiva. Above and beyond māyā is śuddha-vidyā, the realm of pure knowledge in which the experience of 'I' as subject and 'This' as object is realized. At the base of this is 'Īśvara' the Lord of the universe—the principle which is considered in terms of the objective, the 'All' as 'This'. Here we realize the act or the process of objectification. Experience in this realm is expressed in the form of the judgment 'This am I'—'I' included in 'This'. The same 'Īśvara-tattva' in the next higher order assumes the form of 'I am' ; here existence is positive in terms of 'I' in fullness'. This is said to be as Sadāśiva or Sādākhya. It should be noted here that Tantra aims at perfection or fullness of experience as such. At the Sadāśiva stage the 'Icchā' will aspect of Divine Śakti stands predominant and this is the root and precondition of the process of subjectification. Next comes Śakti-tattva which is the root cause of the aforesaid Object (Idam) and Subject (Aham) and contains in Itself all that may evolve or come out. Śakti-tattva acts as the potentiality of the infinite variety of forms in which life becomes more manifest in the universe. It is the very nature of Reality to be or become. Śakti in the supreme is the living embodiment of Bliss (Ánanda), the background of which is Śiva, the Principle of pure Sentience as Revelation. The relation between Śiva and Śakti is identity. It is the supreme experience in which consciousness is being enjoyed as enjoying consciousness or, in other words, as cognition cognized in contemplation.

Mantra

About mantra, it may be said that mantra is the science of the cosmic sound; it is the consciousness aspect of Reality as such. Consciousness, again, is of the nature of knowledge and spontaneous action (Caītanyam dṛk-kriyā-rūpam). In the *Brahma-sutras* of the Vedānta, there is a sūtra, Īkśaternāśabdam' —Brahman sees, therefore, it cannot be free from words, logos or thought. The cosmic sound is based on Brahman as the alphabets forming the Bīja, Bindu and Nāda of the Garland of Letters or (Varṇa-Mālā). The tattvas or principles originate from 'Śabda-

Brahman' and form the object side, while the mantras form the subject side of 'Supreme Experience'; these two sides together constitute the different grades of the universe, i.e., universes, practising and realising which one can attain spiritual ascendency. Once entering into this domain, a *demand* is felt from within and the aspirant reaches higher and higher planes of consciousness. Thus, we find that theoretically Tantra is concerned with 'tattva' and 'mantra', but essentially with spiritual realization.

In this work there is no scope for detailed discussion of mantra, which is extraordinarily subtle and intricate. Below is given the general character of mantra :

Mantra may be defined as, 'Mananam viśva-vijñānam trāṇaṁ saṁsāra-bandhanāt; dharmārtha-kāma-mokṣāṇā māmantrān-mantra ucyate'.

Mantra is that the contemplation of which yields special knowledge (meta-science) of the universe, i.e., knowledge that the universe is not distinct from Brahman (in other words from the point of view of existence the universe is full of Brahman). It is that which makes this awareness of 'the universe as full of Brahman' directly apprehended. As a result the mind becomes free of worldly limitations and is drawn afresh, in that light, to dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa (caturvarga), the four values recognised in the Indian system of philosophic thought.

With this short note on 'mantra', which acts as consciousness aspect of the Absolute, let us state in brief below the six-ways technically called *sadadhva* in the Tantras, in the context of the polarity of the Tāntrika theory of evolution.

Tantras believe in twofold evolutions—together with corresponding involutions—simultaneously taking place in the domains of objects (artha) and logos (śabda) and finally, from the point of view of involution, involving them in Śakti that inheres in Śiva, the Supreme Experience being the Śiva-Śakti identity. Two moments are conceived in this sphere : one is very subtle, realizable in contemplative meditation, and the other is a state of indeterminacy, quiet and absolutely pure, realizable only in intuitive intellection. Hence in Ágamas, Śiva is thought of as both niṣkala (devoid of kalās, transcendent) and sakala (with kalās, emergent or immanent).

Sadadhva

Further Tantras believe in the principle of polarity both in its original and derivative forms. The whole creative process emanates and then evolves only to involve. First, there is that alogical integrated whole, symbolised as 'nāda-bindu', the possible ground or locus for all cosmic generation and fruition. The next step is 'kalā' and 'varṇa' descending from the Bindu. Kalā is that aspect of Reality which manifests as power for evolving the universe of experience and involving it again. Kalā in this sense must logically precede all 'descending movements' of Reality. It is at this stage that space, time, substance and attributes are differentiated from the aforesaid indeterminate whole; all gradations and gradualness originate from 'it'. 'Varṇa' here does not mean letters and colours but natural vibration of the primodial object projected from perfect activity (Bindu). In this sense varṇa sets and rules the order and harmony in creation.

The next step is tattva and mantra. These are subtle things in the realm of dynamic being and becoming. The third and final step is 'bhuvana' and 'pada'. Bhuvana is the universe as it appears to our appreciating centres, it varies individualwise. In pada we get the actual formulation of that universe which subsists to a relevant given centre. In this way, we come down to this perceptible world of names and forms and by reversing the order we reach the realm of Supreme Experience. The above ways are said to be the 'six-ways' or *sadadhva* in the Tantra. There is a saying in the tantras—those who know the 'ṣadadhvā' know everything of the Tantras.

Finally, the Supreme Experience in the Tantras is Śiva. Such Experience has a dual aspect—niṣkala and sakala. The niṣkala is indeterminate experience beyond 'nada-bindu' and 'kalā', quiet and nirvikalpaka. It is static, while the sakala is Śiva in Its own nature to be and become. The niṣkala Śiva or pure Para-Brahman is 'Tat' when contemplated as ṇirguna, i.e., in terms of negation; it is again 'Sat' in its dynamic aspect to be and become. 'Tat-Sat' is ultimately the aforesaid alogical, synthetic integral whole, the Supreme Experience otherwise called the 'Absolute' in the Tantras.

While closing this chapter a short note on kalā is given below. Passing reference is also made, in this context, of subsequent tattvas such as vidyā, rāga, kāla and niyati. All these tattvas together with māyā are called, in the tantras, *sat-kancukas* or principles of subjective limitations which act as sheaths of the individual self (puruṣa).

The Concept of Kala in the Tantras

In the Tantras, both in the Śaiva and Śākta systems of thought, thirtysix tattvas are recognised. Five of them are pure tattvas—pure in the sense that they are directive principles, constitutive of pure spiritual contents in terms of consciousness as meaning. The remaining thirtyone principles belong to the impure order, impure in the sense that they are not wholly constitutive of spiritual contents, not absolutely free from materiality. These so-called thirtyone principles are again classified into two groups—pure-impure (śuddhāśuddha) and impure (aśuddha). The pure-impure principles are six in number, called *sat-kancukas,* such as, kalā, vidyā, rāga, kāla and niyati coming out of māyā, otherwise called kārya-māyā, which, as one of the six limiting principles, itself belongs to the mixed i.e., śuddhā-śuddha order. In this section we shall make an attempt to show the principle of kalā in connection with the Śaiva and Śākta systems of thought.

Kala

In the Śaiva and Śākta systems of thought the principle of kalā has got an important role to play. Kalā is a necessary guide, it helps the seekers after truth to realize the different grades of the Absolute, otherwise called the alogical Indefinite and finally it works as an aid to the very act of realization of the self itself. The impact of such a concept seeks to be changing because of the different grades leading to the Absolute, but the idea underlying kalā as a principle remains the same. While discussing this concept as it is found in the Tantras it should be borne in mind that we are not dealing here with speculative thought set in a rigid mould of logical terms. In the world of

sense-experience dualism is a fact, one cannot get rid of it so easily; so also are qualified monism and absolute monism in the realm of spiritual consciousness. In all these stages of experience kalā has got a definite function to perform—it acts as a psychological phenomenon, a logical idea and eventually as consciousness in the spiritual.

The ordinary dictionary meaning of the term 'kalā' is part or particle of a thing or of a word. Any physical thing or a (grammatical) word may be analysed in terms of each of its different constitutive units. In this sense both the world of physical objects and that of thought or logos have their corresponding constitutive kalās in terms of atoms or aṇus, i.e., of lowest particles on the one and varṇas or letters on the other. It should be noted here that in the Tantras and the Vedas kalā and many other such terms have been used in a very elastic and flexible way.

Secondly, kalā, though essentially conceived as one of the subjective limitations of the self, assumes a different form and plays a different role in the next higher order of things. By 'next higher order' is meant a transition from the un-manifest to the manifest. The change from the subjective to the objective character of kalā, i.e., how kalā comes to assume universal and necessary character, may be analysed from the Sāṁkhya concept of Buddhi.

Part of the Śaiva-Śākta scheme of evolution/manifestation bears some resemblance to the Sāṁkhya scheme of the evolution of prakṛti and subsequent principles from it. Buddhi forms the highest and the central evolute in the Sāṁkhya theory of evolution, the nature of which from the subjective point of view is a state of certitude (niścayātmikā), and it is only on this plane, and because of its clear and transparent character, that consciousness as self (puruṣa) gets reflected. Again, Buddhi being the ultimate thought-form bears necessary reference to the world of objects and in this sense it has got its thinkability and is, therefore, subsistent. Kalā, being subsistent, is placed above prakṛti which is the unmanifest ground of this perceptible world of names and forms and just below kārya-māyā, the source of the principles of experiencing out and also of the principles of

subjective limitation otherwise called kañcukas that wrap the individual self (puruṣa). Now the question is why kalā, instead of being used in the singular, is used in the plural. Seemingly, this is because in the theory of Tāntrika evolution/manifestation different grades of the Absolute, beginning from this world of empiricality, through the worlds of intellectuality, right up to that of spirituality, have been recognised. Moreover, like the aforesaid Buddhi-tattva of the Sāṁkhya systems of thought, kalā performs a dual function : (1) it opens out the vista of the world of thought and refers it to objects in general constituting the universe or universes having different grades and (ii) suggests the way of realising the Supreme and helps the seeker in that realization. Finally kalā stands for consciousness as Śakti (Cicchakti) by the help of which all the thirtysix principles already referred to, beginning from Śiva the highest principle down to pṛthvi, have been manifested. Here Kalā as Śakti acts as self-transcending reference of the 'Subject as Freedom'. The relation between this self-transcending reference as Śakti and the possessor of this Śakti (Śiva) may be characterised as a special form of identity in difference, which is analogous to the relation that exists between light and fire as co-extensive. The term kalā in the last analysis must mean that aspect of Reality by which it manifests as power (Śakti) for evolving this universe and involving it again. It is the prakṛti (i.e., nature) of Reality so to manifest itself. It should be noted here that Śiva in the Śaiva-Śākta Ágamas is both transcendent (niṣkalā) and emergent or immanent (sakala) as we have already seen. It is thus clear that kalā, finally, must logically precede all descending movements of Reality.

Kala and Theory of Evolution/Manifestation

It is stated in the *Sarada Tilaka* (a compendium of Tāntrika works of authority),

'Saccidānanda-vibhavāt sakalāt Parameśvarāt

Áśīt śakti stato nādaḥ nādāt bindu samudbhava'

Here Parameśvara having essentially been endowed with sat (existence), cit (consciousness) and ānanda (bliss) is described as sakala (i.e., characterised by kalā), and from the said sakala

Parmeśvara, who is evidently the Supreme Divine Nāda and Bindu get manifested as Śakti. In this sphere Kalā stands for the super-cosmic power of the Lord and is to be clearly distinguished from the five Kalās recognised in the Tantras, such as, (1) Nivṛtti, (2) Pratiṣṭhā, (3) Vidyā, (4) Śānta and (5) Śantyatīta, evolved as forces from the Bindu conceived as cosmic matter and force and related to the Tattvas and Bhuvanas in which Mantras, Mantreśvaras, Mantra-maheśvaras, Vidyās and Vidyeśvaras reside. Further, the Divine Being is conceived there as of the nature of an eternal self-existence (sat), self-consciousness (cit) and self-delight (ānanda), as we have already mentioned. During creation Śakti which so long lay hidden in the depth of Being first manifests itself. This power is characterised as the Transcendent Will or Wish, the prime mover, the initial flutter in the Transcendence. This is the original conception of Kalā. From this point of view, it would appear that 'the Supreme Śakti, the eternal co-associate of the Divine Being, either as completely absorbed in it and incapable of being differentiated or as partially emergent is the highest Kalā'. In *Siva-Purana* (Vāyavīya Saṁhitā) it is said that the emergence of Śakti (Kalā) in the beginning of creation is like the appearance of oil out of oil-seeds—'Svecchayā Parā Śaktiḥ............'

In a lower sense, however, the term 'kalā' is used to signify bīja, that is to say, the varṇas, symbolised as the letters of the alphabet and conceived as the basic principles of the lower nāda i.e., sound-potentials. From this point of view, the triangle 'A-Ka-Tha' used in the Tantras and otherwise described as *Kundalini* is the Kalā. [A-Ka-Tha = Bīja or Śakti = almost all the letters (mātṛkās) of the alphabet (garland of letters—varṇamālā)]. The letters are arranged in a triangular form—the form of an equilateral triangle—the three sides of which are formed of sixteen letters each, beginning with "'A'-'Ka' and 'Tha'". Thus, in all fortyeight letters constitute the three equal sides of the triangle.

Brahmarandhra

The concept of the aforesaid Kalā may also be explained from the bodily point of view. Brahmarandhra is often referred

to as the centre of *void.* It extends through the suṣumnā nādi down to the very bottom of the interior of the spinal column. If the mind stays in the *void,* it loses its restless nature and enables one to attain the realization of one's self above the guṇas. The prime Will-power as Kalā and the supreme Nāda emerge from this source. It may be noted in this context that in *Svacchanda-Tantra* the Mahāśūnya is identified with the Vyāpinī Kalā of the great Praṇava. But some writers equate Mahāśūnya with Nāda*. The terms 'sixteenth (śoḍaśī) kalā' and 'seventeenth (saptadaśi) kalā' (of the moon) are used differently in different texts. In some of the texts "the supreme Nāda is called the sixteenth kalā or amākalā, while the name 'seventeenth kalā' is reserved for the Supreme Power in terms of 'samanā'. But in other texts the term 'unmanāḥ' is attributed to the 'seventeenth kalā' while the terms 'sati' and 'śūnya' are used synonymously."

The said 'Vyāpinī Kalā' in some of the texts is equated with the great *Void* (Brahmarandhra); 'there is a regular series of śaktis (kalās), representing more and more diminished consciousness and power, e.g. anāśrita, anātha, ananta and vyomarūpa, all being at a high and subtle level and described by yogins in terms of negation.'

The supreme Śakti is sometimes described as the aforesaid amākalā. 'It is eternal, ever emergent and of the nature of unalloyed bliss, the other kalās which go into the make up of the world being supplemented by it.' The amākalā reveals two points and flows on in order to manifest forms. 'Every form in the universe, whether a subject or an object or an instrument of knowledge, is in some sense identical with 'amākalā', though it may be made to appear as different from it.'

The unit of Prakāśa and Vimarṣa may be characterised as Bindu, called Kāma or Ravi (Sun). 'The emergence of two bindus out of this primordial one is the state of visarga. The two bindus are agni (fire) and soma (moon), conceived as citkalā.' This is not a state of dualism, but one of union of two inseparable elements of a single whole. 'The interaction of the bindus causes nectar or the creative fluid to flow out. This is the so-called hārda-kalā, the essence of ānanda.'

***Sri Tattva Cintamani* of Pūrnānanda**

'*Prakasa* within *vimarsa* is of the form of a white bindu and *vimarsa* within *Prakasa* is of the form of a red bindu called nāda. The two bindus in union constitute the original Bindu, called Kāma, of which there are kalās.' The unity of the three is the substance called Kāmakalā, from which originates the entire creation—all the worlds of things and beings. The triplication or triputi of jñāna-icchā-kriyā, subject-object-relation or, in other words, pramātā-prameya and pramāṇa may be referred to in this context*.

The modification of Bindu which follows from a disturbance (kṣova) of its equilibrium, under the stress of Divine Śakti at the end of dissolution (pralaya), gives rise to five kalās which precede further progressive modifications called tattvas and bhuvanas. These kalās are nivṛitti, pratiṣṭhā, vidyā, śānta and śāntyatīta as we have already mentioned, and there are fourteen bhuvanas corresponding to these kalās.

Sadadhva (Six Ways) and Kala

Kalā in the Supreme after being modified by Nāda-Bindu is what may be called *partial,* which means that when this point or stage is reached the principle of polarity in the sphere of cosmic descent operates—such as kalā-varṇa, tattva-mantra, bhuvana-pada. It is thus clear that kalā in the ultimate sense, must logically precede all descending movements of reality, as we have already stated. But as coming under nāda-bindu, it means *partial,* and the mode of stating which is that from this point the state of differentiation starts. It is here that time, space, things and attributes are differentiated from an alogical integrated whole said to be nāda-bindu complex. Kalā in the basic sense of naṭure-aspect is already implicit in nāda-bindu, but as *partial* it comes after. There is no derogation from dynamic wholeness and perfectness in nāda or in bindu, but in kalā as a derivative all gradation and gradualness (all ascending and descending series in the cosmic process) have their possibility of appearance as we have already mentioned. This possibility can be viewed in two ways—as object and as index or sense. This is how the polarity principle appears when we come to

* *Varivasya-rahasya; Kama-kala-vitasa; yogini-hrdaya-dipika.*

partials. But this does not mean that we have already landed in the concrete universe of our acceptance. The concepts of kalā and varṇa as logically prior to the concepts of tattva and mantra are no doubt a hard nut to crack, but it is noteworthy that new physics too in its newest theoretical venture has found itself confronted with an analogous conceptual impasse. But does it mean that it is in reality a non-entity, not a fact in nature but a mathematical fiction? 'No. it means only that there is reality transcending our conceptual limits, that there are facts beyond our perceptual frontier'. As we work up from our own level to the realm of reals we are bound to cross frontiers one after another, and as we do so 'we come across pastures and measures of the real which strike us not merely as novel but as astounding and baffling.'

The Siddhantins and the Concept of Kala

The Śaiva Siddhāntins of the South classify individual selves in three grades (each having different stages), such as (i) sakala, (ii) pralayakala or kevalin and (iii) vijñānakala. Each of the three grades of selves has three stages : mature, mature-immature and immature according to their respective predispositions in terms of malas, which malas are again divided into three groups such as māyīya, kārmika and āṇava. The selves of the sakala grade are generally covered more or less with all the three malas and with the maturation of time (kāla-paripāka) some of them get freed from the māyīya disposition and attain the vijñāna-kala awaiting state of dissolution. In the pralayakala grade the selves are subjected to kārmika and āṇava malas. With the lapse of kārmika disposition the said selves reach the vijñānakala grade and finally become free by the grace of the Benign Śiva. All this shows that the universe or universes in which the individual selves live and move are constitutive of kalās coming out of Bindu of which we have already mentioned.

It should be noted here that mala is constitutive of the bodily organism and psychical predispositions of individual human beings and kalā forms part of the subjective limitations which bind the individual self as puruṣa and limits the power of omni-potence, said to be one of the five attributes of Śiva.

In the Tantras Śiva is considered to be endowed with five attributes, of which omnipotence (sarvakatṛtva) is one. This attribute is to be considered from the point of view of *will* as transcendent. In the individual self, jīva, (the all-powerful Śiva wilfully assumes the form of jīva), such power gets reduced and the jīva becomes a little doer. This is due to the influence of kalā, one of the subjective limitations inhering in the jīva. It should be noted here that the same power which in relation to Śiva in transcendence is omnipotence is in its limited form kalā in relation to the jīva in the empirical. This we have already mentioned. Ordinarily speaking, the power of lordship (omnipotence) and the power of all-knowledge (omniscience) go side by side : one cannot function without the other. If by lordship (kartṛtva) is meant exercising effort (prayatnatva), then such lordship cannot be absolute, for even in the case of the lord (kartā) so willing it presupposes consciousness of what is willed for. This shows that where there is authorhood there is knowledgehood : authorhood *minus* knowledgehood is inconceivable, there is necessary interrelationship between the two. This is all about kalā.

Now let us say something about the principle of vidyā (vidyā-tattva), the limited form of the power of omniscience (sarvajñātrtva) of the Lord. It should be noted here that vidyā is also one of the subjective limitations inhering in the individual self.

The power of omniscience (revelation or consciousness as revealing) of the Parama Śiva in its limited or conditioned form lying in the jīva is characterised by Śaiva philosophers as the principle of vidyā otherwise called *vidya-tattva.*[*1] This is the limited form of the śuddha-vidyā of the pure order. The vidyā-tattva that lies in individual selves has been characterised in some of the Tāntrika texts as *asuddha-vidya.*[*2]

Vidya

Coming out of kalā-tattva, vidyā-tattva helps the individual

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*1 *Pratyabhijna-hrdaya-vivrti*—pp. 22.

*2 *Para-Pravesika*—pp. 9

selves having limited authorship to know things in a limited way. It is just like the ray of a lamp emitting light within the limited area of a covered cottage. With the help of such limited knowledge the individual selves understand the elements of which the earth is composed and enjoy the worldly joys and sufferings through the instrumentality of senses. They also understand the manifold of sensibility and their mutual relationship. Unlike kalā, vidyā is considered as an instrument (karaṇa) of knowledge. Abhinava Gupta holds that sense-intuitions having been modified by the categories of the understanding become intelligible through the instrumentality of the principle of vidyā. While observing the process of vidyā-tattva coming out of kalā* one thing is noticeable, viz., that it is due to the influence of vidyā that individual selves become little knowers and that what is omniscience in relation to Śiva is vidyā in relation to the jīva in the empirical. Now the question is if vidyā-tattva comes out kalā-tattva, if in other words if kalā-tattva precedes vidyā tattva, *prima facie*, we stand confronted with a paradox, the paradox, viz., whether omnipotence or the de-limiting condition of omnipotence precedes omniscience or whether the de-limiting condition of omniscience—in other words, that which makes the individual self a little doer or little author of his doings—precedes that which makes such individuals little knowers. From the commonsense point of view, we find that the sense of awareness of an object brings in conative effort (to do). But in this context the Śaiva philosophers of Kāśmīra hold a different view. While anticipating such formal inconsistency in common thinking the Śaiva philosophers hold that the tattvas do not evolve or emerge in a gradual way, i.e., one after another; on the contrary, the said tattvas come out simultaneously like the bud of a *kadamba* flower blossoming forth. Instead of following the principle of temporal gradation and gradualness, the Śaiva philosophers have taken the principle of simultaneity into consideration in the field of evolution of tattvas, i.e., they hold that the tattvas beginning from māyā upto pṛthvī (earth) have been evolved all at once, and hence the question of a temporal 'before' and

* Vidyā-ragā .... Kalā Kalayatam—*Tantraloka* 9/203, pp. 161

'after' does not arise at all in such a context and as a result, in relation to the evolution of the tattvas, the said formal contradiction in thought stands ruled out.

Raga

The aforesaid powers of limited authorship and limited cognition are common to all individual human beings. Every individual does something and considers himself as the author of such doings and knows something and thinks that he knows. But the question in this context is what makes the individual act and gives him the incentive to know a particular thing. In reply the Śaiva philosophers hold that at the root of such incentive the principle of attachment, i.e., rāga-tattva*[1], operates. It is due to the influence of the rāga-tattva that an individual is drawn to a particular object of enjoyment and sometimes such power brings people in connection with unholy things. Abhinava Gupta holds that like the aforesaid principle of vidyā, the principle of rāga comes out of kalā. He further holds that the minds of the individuals are just like sheets of white cloth at the beginning and the power of attachment brings them into contact with the objects of enjoyment, as a result of which the minds of the individuals get coloured and do not have knowledge of renunciation (vaīrāgya).*[2]

Sometime the power of attachment (rāga) becomes so strong in individuals that they blindly run after objects of enjoyment disregarding the injunctions of the śāstras and counsels of the wise and even showing disrespect to the long drawn tradition. That the individuals are not capable of getting full satisfaction and what they get is only partial enjoyment is due to the influence of the principle of attachment or rāga. Parama Śiva is ever-satiated, self-contented and that is why It is called Átmārāma. It is ever full of satisfaction and contentment. When such satisfaction or contentment resides in individual selves in a limited form, that exactly is rāga. In other words what is eternal-satiety (nitya tṛptatā) in Śiva as transcendent is little satisfaction

*[1] Rāga .... visayescabhisrango............*Para Pravesika*

*[2] Rāgasca Kalātattvasca bastra kasāyavat samutpannah—*Tantraloka* 9/211

or rāga in the individuals in the empirical. All this shows that through the jīva, being essentially Śiva is capable of being ever-satiated, it is because of his individuality constitutive of the jīva-hood that he loses such power, and what stands as a bar in the case of the jīva to gain full satisfaction may be characterised as rāga,* as we have already said.

Kala

According to the observation made by the Śaiva philosophers of the Kāśmīra school in relation to evolution, in the order of descent next to the vidyā-tattva comes the principle of time, i.e. kāla-tattva, leading to the world of perceptible objects. Time or kāla is proved by the argument of *arthapatti*. We have already seen how the absolute freedom of Śiva, the essence of the jīva, gets limited by the principle of kalā, the all-knowing consciousness or omniscience by vidyā and full self-contentment by rāga which induces the individuals to get attached to a particular object of enjoyment. That limited control or authority and that partial cognition cannot be an all-time affair. Hence all these are to be considered as determined by time. In the case of something originating there must be some consciousness having power to do and to know and also conditions congenial to such origination. It should be noted here that as soon as a particular effect is produced the will to produce such effect disappears. From this point of view it can be said that to admit limited authorship on the part of the agent is to admit time. Likewise, limited cognition too is related to time. There is an order or gradation of the origin of knowledge. From the sense of awareness originates the will to do, from this will to do originates actual efforts and efforts lead to the actual performance of what the jīva needs in this world. If there is no purpose to realize what the jīva wants either in the empirical or in the spiritual there is no need for knowledge. Therefore, there is no denying the fact that the little knowledge in the empirical is conditioned by time. Likewise for all worldly attachment or rāga the element of time is to be considered, for there is nothing in this world

* *Pratyabhijna-vivrti.*

which may be said to be an eternal object of enjoyment. The attachment of the enjoyer to the object of enjoyment is temporal or limited by time. That which is very much attractive for a man in his childhood may not be so in subsequent periods of his life. It is a common experience for man that what is comfortable in winter is just the opposite in summer. The objects of intense attraction during youth seem to be very trifling in old age. All this shows that attachment or desire is not eternal, it is conditioned by time which is ordinarily divided into parts such as past, present and future. The principle of eternity inhering in Parama Śiva as one of Its attributes is, when it resides in the individual self as limited or conditioned, called the principle of time or kāla-tattva.*[1] In other words, kāla is just what binds the individual self and stands in the way of his gaining the state of transcendence.

While winding up the above discussion let us make here a passing reference to the principle of pre-destination otherwise called *niyati*, which comes next to kāla just as kalā precedes rāga. *Niyati* plays an important role in the Śaiva-Śākta scheme of evolution. Abhinava Gupta holds that the power which determines the inevitability of cause-effect relationship, the power viz., which makes the arrangement that such and such cause produces such and such effect and *vice-versa*, i.e., that such and such effect follows such and such cause and not otherwise, is what may be called *niyati*. Further, because of the influence of *niyati* the all-pervasiveness (sarva-vyāpakatva) of the Self as Parama Śiva is curbed and makes the individual self perforce bound by the laws of karma. Hence it may be said that the power as all-pervasiveness of Parama Śiva in Its conditioned or individualised form, i.e., when such power of all-pervasiveness as conditioned resides in the embodied self, is what may be characterised as the principle of pre-destination or *niyati*.*[2]

The above discussion of the principle of kalā (kalā-tattva) in relation to the subsequent principles such as vidyā, rāga, kāla and niyati and their originator kārya māyā gives us an

*1 *Pratyabhijna-hrdaya-vivrti*

*2 *Pratyabhijna-hrdaya-vivrti.*

idea of what may be called in the Tantras the principles of six subjective limitations or ṣaṭ-kañcukas inhering in the jīva.

In line with the findings of Abhinava Gupta it may be mentioned in this context that the aforesaid six principles of subjective limitation are considered in the Tantras as more important than the subsequent twentyfour tattvas such as Buddhi............ Pṛthvi* coming out of prakṛti; for the former (kañcukas) are related to the enjoyers (bhoktṛniṣṭha) as instruments of enjoyment while the latter prakṛti-tattvas as being of physical nature are to be enjoyed (bhogyaniṣṭha).

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* Prakṛti (Mahat) + Buddhi + Ahaṃkāra + Manas + five Jnānendriyas (five sense-organs) + five Karmendriyas (five motor organs) + five Tanmātras (subtle elements) + five Mahābhutas (gross elements) = twenty four Prakṛti-tattvas.

CHAPTER III

TANTRAS : CRITIQUE OF EXPERIENCE

Introduction

Experience in the Tantras is viewed mainly in three different orders, such as empirical, psychical and spiritual. The psychical lies in between the empirical and spiritual. Being intermediary, the psychical negotiates between the empirical on the one hand and the spiritual on the other. It is not fully empirical in the sense that though sense-content is not absolutely denied there, the experience gained is more of the mind as constitutive of the sense-content. It is not fully spiritual in the sense that experience in this stage is not completely free from all sorts of limitation, be they subjective or objective. The two orders such as empirical and psychical fall within the objective as material and material-spiritual, in the sense that the awareness side of the said orders, though in some way dissociated from the world of objects, is not fully distinguished from them. The first order, i.e., the empirical, is fully object-oriented in the sense of experience as constitutive of the world of sensibilities, i.e., the subjective part there is not made distinct. In the psychical the object-oriented sense-content is felt as distinguished from the object in the sense of being constitutive of the subject, having limitations originated by the kārya-māyā. The subject there, though bound, is made distinet and to some extent explicit. The spiritual order consists of awareness pure and simple, free from all sorts of limitation both subjective and objective. This is the regulative part of the whole of the experiential situation made explicit in terms of consciousness acting as free reference in the different strata of Experience-Conspectus. The three orders together constitute experience as a whole and each of them is realisable in terms of revelation. The ways employed there are both logical and psychological in the transcendental senses of the terms.

With this idea at the back we shall try to give an idea of the Tāntrika view of Experience.

In the Tantras, empirically the world of objects is real in the sense that it does not in any way depend on any individual subject.

But spiritually speaking, such a world of objects is a projection of the supreme experiencing principle, called Parama Śiva, being inextricably associated with its unstinted power of freedom called Citi Śakti or Svātantrya Śakti. This is in essence the spiritual power (svātantrya) of Śiva. Here projection is not superimposition illusorily made on the self as experiencing principle, it is a spontaneous act of the Supreme. Such experiencing principle, when directed towards knowing as free-reference is called Citi Śakti. According to the Trika, Consciousness is Self having the powers of knowing and action as its essence—'Caītanyam dṛk-kriyāvat'. In the Tantras in general there is no distinction between Śakti (consciousness) and Śaktimān (possessor of śakti).

Śakti is called svātantrya (freedom) i.e., consciousness as conscious of itself. It is also called vimarśa which means various things at the same time. First, vimarśa is vibration. It is Śiva's awareness of Itself as the integral and all-comprehensive Ego. When there is a reflection of Śiva in Śakti there emerges in the heart of Reality a sense of 'I' which is described as aham vāsanā. This is the original bimba or reflection, of which everything in the universe is pratibimba or ābhāsa, a secondary reflection or shadow. It is at this stage that we can speak of the universe, for according to the Trika the universe is a system of grāhakas (subjects) and grāhyas (objects).* That is why vimarśa is also described as the throb of the 'I', holding within itself and visioning within itself the world of objects. Thus the supreme aham as 'I' is the whole universe in its ideal state, as a vision in Parama Śiva. Like the supreme and complete 'I' (Pūrṇa-ahamtā), the individual soul is also prakāśavimarśamaya, i.e., consciousness as conscious of itself.

Analogically speaking, prakāśa in the case of the individual soul is just like a shining intelligence, the vimarśa aspect of which lies in the sense of awareness of such intelligence in the mind of the individual *as his own* in the form of ideal vision, mixed with his own inclinations.

How Parama Śiva out of His own accord assumes the form

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* *Isvara-pratyabhijna-vimarsini,* 1 : 5.11

of an individual together with six sheaths otherwise called ṣaṭ kañcukas such as kalā, vidyā, rāga, kāla and niyati, issued from kārya māyā which also acts as one of the six sheaths and is thereby bound by three impurities (malas) such as māyīya, kārmika and ānava and how individuals can rise above those impurities otherwise called bindings (pāśas) and become one with the Transcendent Śiva, is a question to be discussed in chapter IV, Tantras as ways of liberation or Freedom.

Universal Consciousness

Now let us see how universal consciousness as power acts in different orders of experience involving subject and object and beyond them. In the Pratyabhijñā system Śiva as Śakti manifests Itself as a *correlated order* of knowers, knowables and means of knowing. The main idea is that saṁvit or consciousness is the only real source of knowledge, i.e., everything is essentially Śakti, nay Śiva-Śakti. Siddha Somānanda in *Siva-Drsti* argues against the normally acceptable pramānas such as perception, inference and so on. Later writers, including Abhinava Gupta, accept the said pramānas as ordinary means of empirical knowledge but insist that saṁvit is the real instrument not only in the field of true spiritual knowledge but also in the empirical sphere.

According to the Trika, (Kāśmīra Śaivism) every phenomenon, be it felt or perceived, is the manifestation of the power of Supreme Consciousness. Consciousness pervades everywhere and works in the worlds of matter and spirit both. To understand this it is to be realized that the Parama Śiva by Its own power of freedom has both created and held the universe under It.

According to Trika the supreme experience is to be realized in the supreme experiencing act. Whatever is realiazble is the wonderful manifestation of the Supreme Power having different modes of consciousness such as willing, cognising, feeling and so on.

Further the Trika of Kāśmīra Śaivism is a rational exposition of a view of reality realizable through more than normal experience. The exponents of this system are Yogins.* Its concepts are experience concepts. From the chronology of thought,

* *Pratyabhijna-karika.*

Kāśmīra Śaivism has passed through three marked stages—āgama, spanda and pratyabhijñā. The Supreme Word, otherwise called Parā-vāk, is the self-expression of Reality. This is *wisdom,* some form of revelation or illumination—Reality's awareness of Itself.*[1] From one point of view this is knowledge descending through the various orders of human intelligence; from another point of view, it is the universe as the self-manifestation of Reality, not indeed as we know it but as it is in its original state. Everything in the universe, be it subjective or objective, evolves from the supreme Vāk, otherwise called Ágama, like the Veda which is called nitya-vāk or eternal Word.*[2]

Śakti or consciousness is conceived in the Pratyabhijñā system as that aspect of Parama Śiva which being only an aspect is not in any way different from or independent of Parama Śiva, but is one with Him. ("Parā śakti ... śivabhaṭṭārakābhinnā")*[3] If anything it is, it is the creative power of Parama Śiva.

The self-same Śakti or consciousness has again an infinite number of modes, of which five are the most fundamental; these again are reduced to three, such as icchā, jñāna and kṛiyā (willing, cognising and acting) : "Icchā-jñāna-kṛiyā-śakti-yuktā Śiva-rupā".*[4] The power of holding and bringing in conscious relation with oneself and with one another is the Jñāna-Śakti, 'āmarśātmakatā jñānaśaktiḥ'.*[5] Ámarṣa is defined as 'Iṣattayāvaidyonmukhatā' i.e., just the awareness of the object as presentation without reacting. In the spiritual order (Śuddhādhvan) of experience, participation of consciousness assumes the forms of cit, ānanda, icchā, jñāna, and kṛiyā belonging to the five principles such as śivatattva, śaktitattva, sadāśivatattva, īśvartattva, śuddhavidyātattva.

The Trika upholds the theory of processing out or ābhāsa in the empirical. Ábhāsa is an universal idea. It shines as particular when it is related to space and time because of the purposiveness of the cognitive activity; otherwise the cognitive

*1 *Tantra-sara,* Kāsmīra Ed., p. 4
*2 *Rg Veda* VIII 64.6
*3 *Pratyabhijna-hrdaya*, p. 2
*4 *Tantra-sara* āhn. 1
*5 *Tantra-sara,* āhn. 1

activity would terminate at its primary stage and would not relate the apprehended to temporal and spatial considerations.

It should be noted here that the universal manifestation according to the Trika consists merely in an experiencing out in as much as the ultimate source of the universe is a Reality which is the experiencing principle. As there is no possibility of some other ingredients coming into the composition of the universe save and except the experiencing principle by itself, the process of production and reproduction has no meaning other than just multiplication into thoughts and ideas. The process is, therefore, one of shining out ābhāsas or ābhāsa or unmeṣa, whereby there arises in some thought some other thought like bud in a full-blossomed flower. The process is guided by a logical necessity as a certain conclusion of a particular kind follows inevitably, in a rationally thinking mind, from certain premises of a general type.*[1]

The aforesaid orders of experience may also be divided into three, such as aśuddha (impure), śuddhāśuddha (impure-pure) and śuddha (pure). The first order covers twenty-four tattvas upto prakṛti more or less similar to those in Sāṁkhya. The state of materiality here is dense and the experiencing self is bound by three impurities such as āṇava, māyīya and kārmika. The second order consists of six contracting factors (ṣaṭ-kañcukas), including kārya-māyā, which acts as bindings or covers of the all-experiencing self and reduce It to a little knower and a little doer, called otherwise puruṣa, and experience gained in that context is limited experience (jñānam bandhaḥ). All our cognitive faculties suffer inherent limitations. These kañcukas being primarily subjective limitations may be roughly compared with the forms of intuition and categories of understanding of Kant as enunciated in the Transcendental Aesthetic and Analytic of his work *Critique of Pure Reason*. Here the experience as the limited subject has these kañcukas always with it covering it as it were with a manifold veil, through which alone it can have experience.*[2]

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*[1] *Spanda-karika*, 4 ; *Pratyabhijna-vimarsini* iii, ii ; *Pratyabhijna-hrdaya*, Sūtra ii.

*[2] *Isvara-pratyabhijna-vimarsini*

The veil for ever interpolates itself between the experiencer on the one hand and the experienced on the other; the veil is for ever presupposed, it being the first as an inevitable prerequisite before any limitedly individual experience is had. As prakṛti-māyā stands at the end of the aśuddha stage, so kārya-māyā as constitutive of the limiting factors (pāśas) is being realized in as much as it acts as the principle which imposes these limitations on what is really and essentially unlimited by space, time and causality and as that which makes one realize a separation between himself as the experiencer and objects which are experienced and which serves as the cause of experiencing plurality where there is really none.

Kant and Pratyabhijna

In the first Critique Kant holds that our knowledge is knowledge of objects and depends on two factors—sensibility and understanding. Through sensibility data are given to us and through understanding we interpret and cognize them. In short, we receive sensations and perceive objects. Kant further holds that space is a form of externality in which alone mind can be aware of sense-data as being outside of us. Time is the form of succession in which mind can receive sensations and inner experiences one after another. Both of them as *a priori* forms of intuition are subjective. They are real in so far as experience in the empirical is concerned. The Pratyabhijñā system also considers space and time as subjective limitations and as contracting factors they bind the unlimited self and make undivided experience bound in the empirical.

For Kant the particular is not a bare content without form. Kāśmīra Śaivism holds that no patch of colour is ever produced without the experience of form (rūpa). But a little reflection shows that it would really be the experience of something, some power or energy which builds up, transforms or destroys such forms. When there suddenly arises a patch of colour in the vacancy of the horizon, it no doubt is seen as a shape and form of some sort, but this form may be said to be the same thing as is seen as colour, for, without it, colour as thus perceived at the time has hardly any meaning. And, therefore, the perception of

colour of this type means really the same thing as perception of forms, so much so that instead of saying that there arose the experience of the variety of colours one might as well say that there arose the experience of the variety of forms. (The Sanskrit word 'rūpa' means both colour and form).

In the 'Aesthetic' Kant speaks of space and time as manifolds of intuition. In the 'Analytic' he points out that space and time themselves must involve the synthetic unity of understanding. Even in the perception of the particular an element of structure or synthesis is thus involved. Kant however goes further and says that perception also involves the activity of Reason, for it presupposes the idea of the system of reality. If we regard reality as a thoroughly interconnected system it would follow that every part of such a system must be organically related to the other parts as well as to the whole. The Pratyabhijñā system also propounds the theory of Reality as an organic unity made intelligible through experience-concepts made up of knowers, knowables and means of knowing in the empirical and beyond them is the spiritual. The kañcukas in the śuddhāśuddha order as subjective are forms through which experience in the empirical is received. The content of such experience as derived from the world apparently seems to be given but when analysed properly it reveals that it is nothing but the projection of an experiencing principle made up of pure elements. Thus the three orders as already enunciated form a unity of seeming diversities completely merged in a system of coherence. As a propounder of the theory of ābhāsa-vāda in the empirical and svātantrya-vāda in the transcendental, it is held that in the Pratyabhijñā system everything is revealed in experience as an indivisible individual whole involving transcendental act.

Further, for Hume experience is described as a series of discrete sense-data. For Hegel Reality is a vast organic system in which the parts are the 'microscopic reproduction of the macroscopic whole'. Against Hume Kant insists that universal and necessary elements are involved even in the particular. Against Hegel he forewarns that though the given may be concrete as including in itself the various aspects of combination, it is not and cannot be concrete in the sense of being the

self-contained universal. "The systematic unity as a mere idea is on the other hand only a projected unit and must be regarded not as given in itself but only as a problem of understanding".* In the Pratyabhijñā School the projected unity as a mere idea is made realizable in the sense of creativity or processing out as an experiencing principle expressing itself in different forms.

A difficulty arises here : concepts are universal but sense-intuitions are particular; if, now, both sense and understanding refer to the same object, would not concept then lose its universality and be reduced to intuition? Kant's reply is that the essence of a concept is to ignore the existential differences of particular intuitions and express the unity of their nature. The understanding proceeds by establishing relations between objects of sense. 'All judgments are functions of unity among our representations, and by function I mean the unity of the act of bringing various representations under one common representation.'

Kant further says that sense and understanding are both involved in all experiences and it is their unity which constitutes experience and for that reason neither has any application beyond experience. Noumenal Reality must then remain beyond the reach of human ways of knowing but act as a limiting condition. We have, therefore, within experience an inner contradiction. On the one hand objects of experience are revealed to us only through the co-operation of sense and understanding and, on the other hand, the recognition of this suggests to us the existence of some reality beyond. What it revealed in limited experience is never completely revealed. Our knowledge of objects is an ever-growing process. Neither sense nor understanding can exhaust the infinite mysteries of the real. Kāśmīra Śaivism, while believing in the subjective limitations within the empirical, posits the felt-sense of a *demand* to transcend the boundaries of sense and understanding and attain the supreme. Such a demand is felt with the dawn of śuddha-vidyā or pure knowledge. It should be noted here that there are frontiers beyond our sense-perception as there is reality beyond our conceptual limit.

It should further be noted here that while the said six

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* *Critique of Pure Reason*, **A 647, B 675**

contracting factors including kārya-māyā acting as the principle of subjective limitations make the supreme knowledge limited on the one hand, āṇava mala which inheres in the individual self is responsible for the non-intuition of the true nature of the self on the other. Experience in this order has the binding effect and covers the pristine glory of the self. First there arises in the self the idea of not-self leading to the false sense of the self in the not-self. This is due to āṇava mala. Once Śiva binds Itself out of Its own accord, It becomes self-limited i.e., bound by limitations or pāśas. It becomes paśu and loses Its lordship over the world. Because of this limitation the individual soul loses its svātantrya and falsely identifies itself with what it is not. The basic mala leading to the atomicity of the individual soul gets reinforced by two other impurities such as the māyīya and the kārmika ones. The māyīya mala furnishes the individual soul with body and other means of enjoyment on the one hand and the series of categories as covers or kañcukas on the other. The kārmika mala is responsible for continuing the fetters of embodiment, and due to this impurity or mala the puruṣa becomes subject to good and bad deeds and becomes entangled in repeated births and rebirths.*

Tattvas

The pure order consists of experience having five principles of universal subject-object divided into five stages such as Śuddha-vidyā, Īśvara, Sadāśiva, Śakti and Śiva. From the top Śiva-tattva is the first stage in the process of universal manifestation and it is a state in which the cit aspect of Śakti is most manifest; all other aspects are no doubt there but are held as it were in suppression or suspense. It should be noted here that in *Pratyabhijna hrdaya* the Śiva-tattva in which Śakti is included is shown quite outside the range of the tattvas. It should be noted here that the tattvas come into operation only at the time of manifestation, but Śiva-tattva including Śakti-tattva remains beyond the range of such manifestation. In *Siva-drsti, Isvara-pratyabhijna-karika* and similar other texts of the Pratyabhijñā

* *Isvara-pratyabhijna-vimarsini*, III, 2.4.6

school, Sadāśiva or Sādākhya-tattva is taken to be the first wherefrom the tendency of experiencing out is initiated. According to Utpalācārya, Śiva is the embodiment of Will as Śakti ('Icchā-śakti-mayaḥ Śivaḥ,)*. He counts three principal modes of the self-same Śakti such as Icchā, Jñāna and Kṛiyā; Cit and Ánanda being excluded. This is in line with the views of Abhinava Gupta.

Experience—Five Principles of Subject-Object

Unlike the Kantian theory of Ideas of Reason which are purely formal, the five principles (Śuddha-tattvas) of the Pratyabhijñā school are to be considered as the 'regulative principles' of experience-concepts. Counted from the bottom, the first is the principle of correlation between the experiencer as 'I' and the experienced as 'This', technically called 'Sad-vidyā' or 'Śuddha-vidyā' or pure knowledge expressed in the judgment 'I am this'. 'I' and 'This' are correlated there in the form of a balance between the subjective and the objective within the world of spirituality. Such Śuddha-vidyā bears a unique significance in the sense that therefrom the upward journey towards the Supreme called Parama Śiva or 'Pūrṇa ahamtā' starts. Moreover, the limiting concept as vidyā-tattva (avidyā) within the mixed order furnishing the limited experience gets fully purified there and assumes the form of all-knowledge or omniscience. Experience at this stage is not gained through any empirical means but through the sense of spirituality born out of a felt demand for spontaneous act. The alleged objective content there is not in any way contradistinguished from the subjective, in the sense that experience there is divested of all sorts of empiricality. Śuddha-vidyā is the principle of correlation between the experiencer and the experienced which would otherwise remain unconnected with each other, and, not only that, but also for it there would be no reason whatsoever why what are mutually so different in nature, viz., the experiencer and the experienced, should be able to affect each other. In short, without śuddha-vidyā or in other words the science which makes correlation between the subject as experiencer and object as experienced possible there would

* *Siva-drsti*

be no knowledge or experience at all.

The next stage within the pure order is the principle of identification otherwise called Īśvara-tattva or the principle of Lordliness or what might be expressed in the judgement 'This is I'. In this judgment the 'I' or the subjective element gets completely fused or identified within the 'This' which is, in other words, the principle of pure objective in terms of 'Thou' or 'You'. The 'I' is here realized in terms of 'You', for what are correlates like two poles of a magnet imply an essence of which as a unity they are the poles. At this stage the 'You' side of experience as pure objectivity is most manifest and everything, be it individual subject or object, is merged into it.

The stage following Īśvara-tattva is the Sādākhya-tattva (that which is called Reality as such, i.e., Sat) which enables any of us to experience, i.e., to feel, think and speak of anything including one's self as an individual being. This is the principle of being or existence as such and all sorts of becoming find their resting place there. This is expressed in the judgment 'I am' in which 'am' or existence is realized in the sense of 'I' as the pure experiencing principle. This state may be compared with the Vedāntic Brahman in the aspect of 'Sat'. The metaphysical experience as Being finds its fullest expression in the sense of pure 'I'. The other two stages of the pure order, such as Śakti-tattva and Śiva-tattva, are essentially of mystic character (rahasya) bearing the nature of pure spirituality. Śakti-tattva, the ānanda aspect of Brahman is the principle of negation (niṣedha-vyāpāra-rupā) and potentialization.* Further, the Śakti-tattva stands hyphenated with the Śiva-tattva, the pure Cit aspect of Reality.

The principle of the pure experiencer by itself, with the experience of the objects and the means of experiencing them eventually negatived and suppressed, i.e., the principle of the pure 'I' without the experience of even an 'am' as formulated in the judgment 'I am' in the *Sadakhya* tattva, is technically the Śiva-tattva, literally the Benign Principle. Hence with the experience of the supremely ideal universe negatived, the Śiva-tattva is only the pure light of intelligence (cinmātra) without

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* cf. Commentary on *Paramartha-sara*

anything whatsoever to shine upon—without even a trace of the notion or feeling of a universe to be experienced. It is thus only the pure 'I' without even the thought or feeling 'I am'. For 'am' or 'being' implies a relation, namely of 'identity', howsoever subdued or indistinct, implying 'I am this' where 'this' means body, sensibilities, mind and the like, or 'I am what is here and now'. But as there is at this state no notion or a feeling of 'this' or 'that' (of an idam, meaning, as it should be at this stage, the ideal universe), there can be no thought of even an 'am' in the experience of Śiva-tattva. Further, no category such as 'this' or 'that' or 'not-this' or 'not-that' can be applied there. It is, therefore, the experience as the principle of pure 'I' as full or Pūrṇa-ahamtā, constitutive of both Prakāśa (A) and Vimarśa (Ha), condensed in Bindu (Ma), i.e., *AHAM* (Ananyomukha-ahaṁ-pratyayaḥ).* This pure subject as 'I' can be experienced only in terms of freedom.

Thus Śiva-tattva is the first stage in the universal manifestation and it is the state in which the cit aspect of Śakti is most manifest. All the aspects are no doubt there but they are all submerged as it were, having no distinctive character of their own, as we have already said. And because these other aspects of the Divine Śakti are held back and submerged, and because the experience of the supreme ideal universe of the Parama Śiva is negatived, there must be some aspect of the Divine Śakti Herself in operation to make such a tremendous act of negation possible. This is the universe-negativing aspect of the Divine Śakti, called Śakti-tattva which is to be distinguished from Śakti as such quite as much as Śiva-tattva is distinguished from Śiva as such i.e., Parama Śiva. From one point of view, this Śakti-tattva is the second element, so to say, entering into the composition of the manifested universe. From another point of view, it can scarcely be called the second stage as it comes into manifestation simultaneously with the Śiva-tattva. Indeed, it may be safely said that it is by operation of the Śakti-tattva that the manifestation of the Śiva-tattva becomes at all possible.

If counted separately, the Śakti-tattva is really the manifesta-

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* *Pratyabhijna-vimarsini*—III, 1.2

tion of the ānanda aspect of the Divine Śakti, as already stated; for the nature of ānanda as perfect bliss and supermost self-satisfaction is absolute rest in what is one's own, i.e., cessation of all movements. As there is at this stage absolutely no such moving out, but only the feeling of absolute peace and rest in one's real self (svarupa-viśrānti), this feeling can only be the realization of the ānanda aspect of the Divine Śakti.

Thus, as the Śiva-Śakti-tattva comes into manifestation it is realized as the pure light of the experiencing principle or, in other words, cit realizing itself as only the pure 'I' without the experience of even an 'am', much less of a universe which that light can shine upon and reveal; and the other aspect (Śakti) is but the realization of the feeling of only the profoundest bliss and peace passing all understanding—that ānanda which is to be the core of all things to come.

Although Śiva and Śakti as tattvas proceed in a sense from Parama Śiva, in as much as they form an experience which is other than and distinct from the supermost experience such as the Parā-saṁvit as Parama Śiva, they are really eternally existent in the sense that they exist even at the time of final dissolution or *pralaya,* whereas all other tattvas come into manifestation only at the time of creation. At the time of complete dissolution (pralaya) the Śiva and Śakti tattvas remain in the bosom of Mahāmāyā as the seed of the universe to come. If the analogy of the seed is carried further then the Śiva-tattva is what may be called *Life* in the universal seed, while the Śakti-tattva is the potentiality of the infinite variety of the forms in which that *Life* becomes manifest in the universe. Further, the Śiva-tattva as *Life* (Prāṇa) in this sense is the very first flutter of Parama Śiva, the first vibrating movement towards a universal manifestation; and the Śakti-tattva is what checks, controls and regulates that movement of *Life* and acts as the principle of restraint.*[1] The first vibration is here nothing more than the first flutter of *Life*.*[2]

The Śiva-tattva is showing itself as the principle of the pure 'I' as distinguished from the personal ego or ahaṁkāra, while

*[1] *Tattva-Sandoha*

*[2] See Chapter V

the Śakti-tattva is being realized as the principle which divests the Śiva-tattva of everything else in order that it may remain the principle of Pure 'I'.

There are obvious and well-known differences in the contents of experience belonging to the different orders of Reality, as already stated; but no such distinction is made so far as the contents within the pure order are concerned. Differences in the pure order, if any, are differences of forms only. These forms are not absolutely abstract by nature, they are the necessary forms of illumination, made intelligible through the constitutive principle of *reason* as processing out.

Even then what is experienced severally is not one but several, though the performances are absolutely identical in the sense that they are absolutely alike in all and every respect. And one performing company in these cases is the Divine Śakti as such in the sense of experiencing principle—She who holds in Her womb the whole of the universe of these pure, impure and the mixed orders as an eternal potentiality and goes on reproducing it ceaselessly and severally for the several experiences so long as there are any in manifestation.

And as the experiences have a collective existence, their universals have similar existences forming the experiences of the collective entities at the different stages. But while such distributively and collectively existing universals must be very different in the regions where limited beings have distributive experiences, there can be hardly any such differences where the experience is not limited, but universal, being constitutive of everything, i.e., to experience at any given stage and without any restriction as to duration and extention, i.e., it is timeless and spaceless.

While the aforesaid tattvas are constantly acting and showing themselves as the principles and general features of our daily life and hourly experience—which are but the various combinations of these principles and elements—the Parama Śiva as the supreme experiencing principle stands behind and beyond them all, as well as comprising them all, as the supermost synthesis, so far with the universal and its different planes of experiences as stated in the Śaiva-Śākta system of thought.

Notion of Consciousness

In the present section, while explaining the Śaiva-Śākta system of thought as a Critique of Experience we shall introduce in brief only the Vīra Śaiva notion of consciousness. The Vīra Śaiva philosophers always understand consciousness in terms of self-consciousness which happens to be the necessary prerequisite of subsequent experiences we have of different orders of Reality. This self-consciousness is realized and expressed in the form 'I am the knower'. The very sense of 'I' as the knower of what is mine or me involves consciousness, consciousness of itself being conscious. If consciousness as knowing is taken as the formal moment of an organic system, constitutive of an integrated whole, the material moment should be taken as the ego as knower within the self-consciousness standing behind the whole structure of world-knowledge which is nothing but the unfoldment of the knowing aspect of the whole content of reality. For a Vīra-Śaiva philosopher, 'to know is necessarily to be'. Hence in this system being is not so much opposed to knowing. A brief analysis of consciousness as knowing and the content of consciousness as knowing will not be out of place here.

'From the analytic point of view, consciousness involves processes of knowing, willing and feeling. The content of knowing is perfectly distinct from knowing and is unconstituted by it. The content of willing is imperfectly distinct from willing ; though distinct from itself it is constituted by it. The content of consciousness and the consciousness make a unity in the case of feeling but not in the case of the knowing and willing. Knowing, feeling and willing are the three modes of distinction between the content of consciousness and the consciousness—the modes which we are reflectively conscious of. Each of them is an implicative or indefinite distinction in some sense and the indefiniteness will be found to consist in the fact that a relation that is intelligible between content and content is only half-intelligible when taken to be the relation between the content of consciousness and consciousness as such.'

For instance, 'A implies B,' when analysed, means 'to know A is to know B'. What does the word 'is' here stand for? The two knowings stand for subjective acts but the connecting word 'is

does mean another act coordinate with them. Nor does it mean that a relation of the contents of A and B is a third term. It appears to be a relation not of the contents but of the conditions in respect of their contents, being however itself not a subjective act of cognition. It cannot be said not to be known though it is not a content of knowing of which A and B are contents. Whether it is the content of reflective consciousness is not known in the reflection itself and so for the reflective consciousness it means neither the consciousness nor the content of consciousness.'

'The only self-evident which we are reflectively aware of is a judgment of the form, 'To know A is to know B' and what the word 'is' in it stands for, this being meant in all judgments or knowledge on the reflective level. This then is the element in all that is reflectively known, that is known as what had not been known, the element that is freed from the implicational relation of the content to the knowing of it, the element that reflection demands to be isolated from but cannot itself isolate. The former is distinct from the latter, but from the point of view of practical experience the content of consciousness is to some extent constituted by the former. In the case of feeling no such distinction is felt between the act of consciousness and its different modes such as knowing, willing, etc., though different grades of consciousness are admitted.*'

Let us now discuss in brief the notion of consciousness as a universal phenomenon from two points of view,— (i) essential structure and (ii) the integral view of consciousness. As regards (i) common human experience, including mystic intuition, involves an element of consciousness. Such consciousness as the psychic phase of all phenomena, as the 'within' of all things, is co-extensive with the universe. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin writes—"In the perspective of the cosmic involution, not only does consciousness become co-extensive with the universe, but

* For this portion (beginning from 'from the analytic point of view' pp. 62 to 'different grades of consciousness are admitted' pp. 63), I am greatly indebted to Professor K. C. Bhattacharyya from whose writings the said portion I have taken.

the universe rests in equilibrium and consistent in the form of thought on the supreme pole of interiorisation".*[1] Sri Aurobindo also speaks of consciousness as the universal metaphysical category. He writes : "There must be behind the action of material energy its means of an evolutionary manifestation, a creation out of itself in the boundless finite of the material universe".*[2] Such consciousness according to the Tantras may be characterised as the essence of cosmic energy, otherwise called *'Citi-Sakti'* (Citisvātantryam-viśva-Siddhirhetuḥ).*[3] Further human consciousness is distinct from the kind of consciousness lying embedded in animal nature, vegetable and animal kingdoms, in so far as it shines by its own intrinsic light ; while revealing objects it also reveals itself as the knowing function. Human consciousness is essentially self-consciousness, as we have already stated in connection with the Vīra Śaiva system of thought.

In strictness of language all that can be said is that Being appears to us as Infinite Consciousness which is here compared to the blue sky. 'Blueness is not illusory, it is a real emergent value resulting from the interaction between the sky and the human mind. Similarly, cosmic consciousness is not an illusion. It is a real emergent value resulting from the mind's encounter with Being. Being is capable of assuming the form of Infinite Consciousness when apprehended by the human mind'.

Further as to the essential structure of consciousness, the question may be asked,—Is it objective in orientation or subjective by nature?

Both Edmund Husserl and Jean Paul Sartre agree that 'Intentionality' is the essential structure of consciousness.*[4] Consciousness is always consciousness of something. Here the word *'of'* implies otherness or objective orientation. 'Consciousness as self-transcending function always goes beyond itself and is oriented to an other. It is a 'noesis' apprehending or intending a 'noema'. In all states of consciousness some objective events or

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*[1] *The Phenomenon of Man*, pp. 56 and 57

*[2] *The Life Divine*, pp. 276

*[3] *Sakti-sutra*

*[4] *Ideas : General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, pp. 242-43

transcended facts are intended'.

We have already stated that human consciousness is also self-consciousness. In order to explain this fact Husserl posits the notion of 'transcendental ego' as the unifying centre of transcendental consciousness. But Sartre points out that it is not necessary to postulate the transcendental ego in order to explain self-awareness. 'Consciousness in its very act of knowing an object is non-positionally and/or non-thetically aware of itself as pure consciousness of itself, it is non-positional consciousness.'*[1] Such non-positional self-awareness is what Samuel Alexander has called 'knowledge by enjoyment', as distinguished from object-oriented 'knowledge by contemplation'.*[2]

According to Sartre, consciousness as pure subjectivity is ego-less. The ego appears on the subjective level as a synthetic complex, as an object of reflection. There is no 'I' on the unreflective level. In the case of mental absorption there is no 'I'. 'It is ideally supplied to serve as the binding thread running through the flux of experience. The ego is also phenomenologically revealed to us as an object of reflection and not as the essential part of the structure of consciousness. The ego is an object apprehended but also as an object constituted by reflective consciousness'.*[3]

Now the question is further asked—Is consciousness in its essential structure the attribute of a separate spiritual substance, or is it an indefinable metaphysical principle, eternally self-subsistent? In the West Rene Descartes defines consciousness as an essential attribute of the mind. As a spiritual substance mind is capable of existing independently of material body; for Kant, consciousness as the presupposition of all knowledge, as the prius of all interpretative acts of understanding, is the epistemological subject.

In the Sāṁkhya philosophy of India pure ego-less consciousness is affirmed as the inmost self (puruṣa-ātman) of the human individual. The understanding, the ego and the mind are evolutes

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*[1] Sartre, *The Transcendence of the Ego*, pp. 44 and 45

*[2] *Space Time and Deity* II, p. 82

*[3] *The Transcendence of the Ego*, pp. 80-88

of the creative dynamism of nature reflecting the light of pure consciousness. Pure consciousness is not a quality or attribute of a mental and spiritual substance. It is consciousness as such.*[1] It is ego-less, non-discursive consciousness. "When the pure self remains beyond buddhi, the reflection of puruṣa in buddhi appears as the ego, the cogniser of all our states, pleasures and pains included".*[2]

Thus the authentic self of the individual is the most essential structure of human reality and Sāṁkhya calls it Puruṣa. Śāṁkara-Vedānta shares the same view and calls it Átman, equating it with the Supreme Being (Brahman). For Sartre, consciousness is purely a phenomenological principle, for Sāṁkhya and Śāṁkara-Vedānta, consciousness is a metaphysical principle; it is independent, self-subsistent and *causa sui* (Svayambhu). Even though logically inseparable, it is the unmoved mover of the psycho-physical dynamism of the human individual. An examination of dream discloses that consciousness functions in dreams creatively without active contact with the external world. An examination of deep dreamless sleep reveals the presence of consciousness there as a sense of vacancy or awareness of nothing and as the non-objective experience of peace and bliss. That is why after a period of deep sleep a man says, "I enjoyed a delightful peaceful sleep". In ontological experience or mystic illumination, consciousness is revealed as the eternally free and self-subsistent ground of existence shining in its own intrinsic light without any need for external stimuli or bodily sense-organs or psychical impulses. Pure self-luminous consciousness, in this respect, is like the sun. It reveals objects without being dependent upon them. And it can shine even in the absence of all objects.

Integral View of Consciousness

Consciousness in its essence is ego-less. In that sense it is *nothing*. Consciousness is multi-functional—it can freely assume different poises. On the one hand, consciousness functions in

*[1] *Samkhya Aphorisms of Kapila*, tr. Ballantyne, p. 455
*[2] *Indian Philosophy*, Radhakrishnan, p. 283

time, bringing in change and evolution. It is also capable of taking a stand entirely outside the entire world of space, time and action and enter into communion with the timeless ground of the cosmic process. Without an understanding of the mode of functioning of consciousness, the whole literature of original religious experience and mystic illumination would be reduced to meaningless jargons.

The phenomenological view that all consciousness is objectively oriented is true of the waking consciousness (jāgrat) of man. But it is certainly not true of the indefinable experience of peace that permeats dreamless sleep (suṣupti) which is void of all reference to objects. It is still less true of the transcendental spiritual experience in which the light of consciousness shines in its intrinsic light with the whole objective world put out of sight. On such a level of consciousness the world does not appear as an illusion, it does not even appear at all. There is no reason to deny such experience as a psychological fact. The error committed by the world-negativing mystics lies not in affirming the validity of non-objective transcendental consciousness but in interpreting such consciousness as a separate metaphysical principle or as the one ultimate reality, or as the total essence of being.

At the beginning, ego-less consciousness characteristic of mystic realization is static and detached. There is a feeling of unreality of the world of distinction and relation; space, time, change and motion seem to be vanishing. Contact with the eternal brings about a downpour of profound peace and fulfilment and the delight of pure existence, which is timeless and may be characterized as 'isness'.

'But with further maturation of spiritual growth and inner unfolding the ego-less consciousness becomes selflessly active and participates in the world. A fuller awareness of being which reveals that which is Eternal Perfection is also engaged in diversified self-expression through the medium of time. So the enlightened person's ego-less consciousness assumes the form of self-less participation in the evolutionary being of the world with a view to manifesting the glory of Being.'

The illumined person's ego-less consciousness is the full-

fledged development, the full-flowering of the ordinary man's consciousness. According to the integral view of consciousness, consciousness, whether ordinary or illumined, whether ego-centric or cosmo-centric and ego-less. has no separate reality apart from man's psycho-physical existence. 'Non-dualism is incomplete without an understanding of this inseparable relationship. Consciousness is no substantive entity, nor has it any intrinsic content of its own. In that sense it is nothingness—it can freely roll over the entire universe. It is the light of Being reflected on the mental mirror of man, capable of revealing the universe in various colours. In other words, consciousness is an emergent value resulting from the individual's receptivity to the all-pervasive luminosity of Being which is the light of all lights.'

Being itself is essentially indefinable. It cannot be defined even in terms of consciousness. 'Not only anthropomorphic notions but also metaphysical determinations are inadequate to the mystery of Being.' 'The ideas of personal god, cosmic consciousness, existence-knowledge-bliss etc., are only relatively valid descriptions of Being'—they are valid from the standpoint of the individual mind.

Consciousness, bliss, compassion and love, righteousness and godliness are all emergent values which appear at the human level resulting from man's awareness of the oneness of all existence in the identity of Being.

The foregoing discussion of consciousness might appear as a digression from the previous discussion of the Vīra-Śaiva notion of consciousness. Śakti or consciousness, according to the Vīra-Śaiva school is the central pivotal point round which the Vīra-Śaiva thought, nay the entire Saiva-Śākta literature, moves. The Vīra-Śaiva system starts from the concept of '*Sthala*', the absolute spiritual principle, and ends in what is called *'Linga'*, the principle of self-consciousness, which apprehends as a whole what man only knows in part. *Linga*, in other words, is characterised as the concept of spiritual dynamic fullness. Hence the foregoing analysis of consciousness would help us to make a comparative study of this vital issue.

Now the question is why Vīra-Śaivism is called *Sakti-visista-*

advaitavāda as against the Parama-advaita of the Kāśmīra Pratyabhijñā school and the pure Advaita of the Siddhānta system of the Tamil school of Śaīvism. According to the Trika of Kasmira Śaiva Śāstras flow out in five streams (srotas) from what may be regarded as the five faces of Śiva, such as, Īśāna, Tatpuruṣa, Sadyojāta, Aghora and Vāmā which again correspond to the five aspects of Its five-fold Powers and Glory, Cit, Áanada, Icchā, Jñāna and Kriyā. Further, sixty-four systems of thought have been enunciated in that school, suited to the diverse needs of people, which have been classified into three categories, such as :—

a) Essential identity of all that appears as many (advaita or abheda)
b) Diversity as the essence of things (bheda).
c) Unity from one point of view and diversity from another point of view (bhedābheda).

The earlier Ágamas, including Spanda-śāstras, generally propound the theory of bheda and bhedābheda, but the Pratyabhijñā system as enunciated by Abhinava Gupta definitely speaks of advaita.

The peculiarity of the Trika consists in the fact that as a system of philosophy it is a type of idealistic monism (advaita) and as such differs in a fundamental manner from the other forms of Śaiva philosophy, mentioned, for example, in the *Sarva-darsana-Samgraha* of Mādhavācāryya. As an example of its thoroughgoing Advaitism we may refer to the opening stanza of the *Siva-drsti* which runs as— 'Asmadrūpa Samāvista Svātmanātma nivārane'. Here the whole worship as well as the obstacles for the removal of which the worship is offered (ātma-nivārane) is regarded as essentially the same Śiva Itself.

Vira Saiva

In Vīra-Śaiva thought Absolute Being (Śiva) and Absolute-Being as Consciousness (Śakti) are related in a state of dynamic spiritual fullness in terms of self-consciousness where there is no antinomy between Being and consciousness of Being as knowing. The relation envisaged there is not an external relation between Śiva as Being and Śakti as consciousness of Being but

an internal relation of non-separability (ananyatva). Unlike the Naiyāyika theory of relation of inherence (samavāya) existing between two padārthas, the theory of non-separability between Śiva as the formless ground of all existing things and beings and Śakti as the Consciousness pervading the entire universe bears some resemblance to the theory of apṛthak-siddhi of Rāmānuja. Rāmānuja recognises three Principles (tattva-traya), such as matter (acit), soul (cit) and god (iśvara) as ultimately real, just like Pāśa, Paśu and Pati of the Siddhāntins. The first two are absolutely dependent upon the last, the dependence being conceived as that of the body upon the self. Matter and soul, thus, constitute the body of God; God is the soul not only of the inorganic nature but also of individual selves or jīvas. According to Rāmānuja, inorganic matter is also ensouled. God is only mediately expressed through the jīva.*[1] He is sometimes also spoken of as being so directly.*[2] Further, Viśiṣṭādvaita discards relation as superfluous and views inseparability itself (apṛthak-siddhi) as the nature of the two relata. Strictly speaking, it is not therefore relation.*[3] But it is still spoken of as relation.*[4] The conception of the Absolute, according to Rāmānuja, may be described as that of an organic unity in which in a living organism one element predominates over the rest. The subordinate elements are called viśeṣaṇas and the predominant one is called viśeṣya. Because the viśeṣanas cannot by hypothesis exist by themselves or separately, the complex whole (viśiṣta) in which they are included is described as a unity.*[5] The Vīra-Śaiva system of thought also subscribes to the view of Viśiṣṭādvaita with the predominance of Śakti as constitutive of the integral whole. More, viśiṣṭatva lies in the dynamic fullness of Śakti in terms of self-consciousness, i.e., Consciousness identified with Being. Hence Vīra-Śaivism is called Śakti-viśiṣta-advaita-vāda.

*[1] *Vedartha-Samgraha* with *Tatparya-dipika*, Chowkhamba, pp. 30 and 31.

*[2] *Rahasyatraya-Sara*, Bangalore, III, pp. 121 and 122.

*[3] *Sri-bhasya*, II, ii. 12

*[4] *Sarvartha-siddhi* with *Tattva-mukta-kalapa* of Vedantadesika

*[5] *Sri-bhasya*, p. 132 (Com.)

The Siddhanta Theory of Experience

The Siddhānta theory of knowledge, involving different orders of experience, presupposes the distinction between two orders of evolution, one pure (śuddha) and the other impure (aśuddha). Accordingly, māyā, is twofold—śuddha-māyā and aśuddha-māyā. It is pure (śuddha) when it is not mixed with malas such as āṇava, māyīya and kārmika and it is impure (aśuddha) when it is mixed with these malas.

Śuddha-māyā which is also called Mahāmāyā or *'Kutilai'* is operated on by Śiva Ītself through Its Śakti in its threefold aspect viz., Icchā (Desire), Jñāna (Knowledge) and Kriyā (Will). There are five evolutes of Śuddha-Māyā such as Nāda, Bindu, Sādākhya, Māheśvarī and Śuddha-vidyā. Nāda is Śiva-tattva, while Bindu is Śakti-tattva. The former is the result of Jñāna-śakti, the latter arises when Kriyā-śakti operates on Nāda. When both Jñāna and Kriyā Śaktis operate on Bindu in an equal measure Sādākhya is produced. Māheśvarī is derived when more of Kriyā-śakti is acting along with Jñāna, and from Māheśvarī Śuddha-vidyā is evolved when Jñāna-śakti is the dominant operative factor. These five evolutes of Śuddha-māyā are collectively known as Śiva-tattva of *Preraka-kanda*. These five principles are more or less akin to five directive principles, already stated in connection with the Pratyabhijñā school of Kāśmīra Śaivism.

From Śuddha-māyā the system of sounds is also evolved. The forms of sound are four in numbers—the first is Parā which is absolutely supreme and subtle. It may be equated with Nāda which in terms of Jñāna-śakti is the said Śiva-tattva. The second is Paśyanti which is Divine and yet undifferentiated, like the colours of the peacock in the contents of pea-hen's egg. The third is Madhyamā (Mantra-vāk) which is grosser still and differentiated but is not articulate. The fourth is Vaikharī which is articulate sound. Meaning is made known by a capacity (śakti) which is manifested through letters and words. The Grammarians give the name of *sphota* to this capacity. It resides in Nāda-tattva, the first evolute of Śuddha-māyā.

The rest of the principles in the Siddhānta scheme of evolution arise out of aśuddha-māyā which is also called adho-māyā

(the downward māyā) or Mohinī (that which deludes). Śiva does not a ct on Aśuddha-māyā because of the latter's impurity. Over the remainder of the evolution, it is the divinities like Sadāśiva and Rudra who proceed from Śuddha-māyā that acts. Sadāśiva by means of His Śakti produces from Aśuddha-māyā three principles viz., Kāla (time), Niyati (destiny of necessity) and Kalā (lit. particle) and from Kalā is produced two more principles, viz vidyā (knowledge) and rāga (attachment). These five tattvas constitute the sheaths or cloaks (kañcukas) of the soul. As conditioned by these sheaths the soul becomes what is called Puruṣa-tattva. Prakṛti which is the counterpart of Puruṣa arises out of Kalā by the activity of Rudra. The five sheaths along with Puruṣa and Prakṛti are known as Vidyā-tattvas and they constitute what is called *Bhojyrtr-kanda,* the part of evolution which brings about enjoyment as distinguished from the *Preraka-kanda* which is the directive part consisting of the evolutes of Śuddha-māyā as already stated.

From Prakṛti in its avyakta (unmanifest) state arises Citta or Buddhi (intellect) and from Buddhi evolves Ahaṁkāra (ego-sense). There are three varieties of Ahaṁkāra distinguished by the predominance respectively of sattva, rajas and tamas. From the sāttvika or taijasa ahaṁkāra the organs of sense, including manas, are derived; from the rājasika or vaikṛta the organs of action, and from the bhūtādi the subtle elements called tanmātras are drawn. From the tanmātras are produced the gross elements (mahābhūtas). With these evolutes the evolutionary scheme consisting of thirtysix principles is complete. Māyā is one of pāśas of the soul. It provides the soul with the means, location and objects of enjoyment called *bhogya-kānda* The world of māyā is usually referred to as *asat*. This expression, however, does not mean that the world is non-existent; it only means that the world is other than God who is *sat* and, therefore, *cit*. In the sense that māyā is *acit* or non-intelligent, it is therefore, *asat*.

According to the Siddhāntins souls are by nature omniscient, pervasive and infinite. But because of their association with impurities (malas) they become finite and limited. They are called paśus because they have pāśas (bonds). The three malas that

bind the soul to the course of transmigration are āṇava, kārmika and māyīya.

As regards experience, the Śiddhāntins hold that there are three grades of consciousness—consciousness of pati, paśu and pāśa. It is only pati-jñāna which makes the individual selves free from bondage.

Now let us see how the evolution of jñāna prior to creation takes place according to the Siddhānta scheme of experience. The first order consists of Avabodha which is of two kinds—Samavayavarti and Parigrahavarti. Samavayavarti Avabodha is also of two different grades: Bodharūpa (consciousness aspect) and Kriyārūpa (active aspect). The kriyārūpa has also two distinct divisions—Anugraharupa and Tirodhānarūpa. The aforesaid different subdivisions of consciousness according to the Siddhāntins are given in the following table :—

- Avabodha
  - Samavayavarti
    - Bodha
    - Kriyā
      - Anugraha
      - Tirodhāna
  - Parigrahavarti

The supreme knowledge of the self (avabodha) is revealed through five faces of Sadāśiva situated in five different directions —viz., urdhva (upward), pūrva (forward), dakṣiṇa (right), uttara (left) and paścima (backward).

Sṛṣtikāle Maheśānaṇ Puruṣārthaprasiddhaye
Vidhatte vimalam jñānam Pañcasrotobhilakshtam.

The Ágama Śāstras were with Śiva as Nāda (Cosmic Sound). They were revealed to the created beings through Its five faces and as such consist of six different grades including the Nāda state.

The Śāstras are all pure in nature and sure to purify their followers by dispelling all fear, doubt, suspicion and want of restraints both physical and mental. Accordingly they lay down certain practices and injunctions, which when followed with sincerity, earnestness and firm determination are sure to lead the devotee to his desired goal.

Saktadvaita view of Experience*

The Śaktādvaita view of experience presupposes manifestation of Śakti in different phases in the following way. Initially three states of consciousness or Śakti may be conceived : they are (1) citi-śakti, (2) ānanda-śakti and (3) icchā-śakti. First, there is only pure consciousness or citi-śakti, otherwise called saṁvit, free from anything outside as the other. In the second stage, there is an element of 'other' within it, though without any external projection; in the third stage, the 'other' expresses itself in the form of the world as the said consciousness projecting itself outside.

The said caītanya (consciousness) or citi-śakti is of the nature of self-luminous light (sphurat) which shines on itself (svātman), and is known as ahaṁtā or 'I-ness'. As resting on the non-ego (anātman), it expresses itself as 'idaṁtā' or 'thisness'. The essence of caītanya consists in the fact that as light (prakāśa) it is always revealed to itself. The universal ego or 'I' stands behind all dualism. The supreme ego is universal in the sense that there is nothing to limit (pariccheda) or differentiate (vyavṛtti) it and the entire visible universe exists in identity with it. But this characteristic by its very nature is absent from matter (jaḍa) which is not self-manifest. Just as light and heat co-exist in fire, so do the universal ahaṁtā and freedom or śakti co-exist in caītanya. This freedom is māyā which, though essentially identical with caītanya (cidaikarūpa), brings out varieties of an infinite kind, but in bringing out this variety it does not in the least swerve from the essence.

The appearance of the universe in pure caītanya has three distinct phases :

I) The first is the germinal phase (bījāvasthā) when the material power is pure. Matter does not assert itself at this stage and consequently there is no differentiation in this state in so far as the content of experience is concerned. This state is represented by five pure Tattvas such as (1) Śiva-tattva, (2) Śakti-

*This is taken from 'Sakta Philosophy' by M. M. Gopinath Kaviraja, published in 'History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western'; (George Allen & Unwin).

tattva, (3) Sadāśiva-tattva, (4) Īśvara-tattva and (5) Śuddha-vidyā-tattva. This is the regulative part of the whole of experience-conspectus. (This we have already discussed in connection with the Pratyabhijñā scheme of experience.)

II) The second stage in the evolution of avidyā represents a further development of difference in materiality when the subtle products of matter make their appearance. This is the state of mixed Tattvas. Mixed Tattvas are : (1) Māyā, (2) Kāla, (3) Niyati, (4) Kalā and from Kalā (5) Rāga and (6) Vidyā. This stage belongs to the formative part of the experience-concepts and may roughly be compared with the forms of intuition and some of the categories of understanding of Kant.

III) The third and the grossest stage in the evolution of avidyā is represented by the dense products of the miśra-tattvas, where matter is overwhelmingly strong. There are twentyfour tattvas in this stage—from the primary Prakṛti down to Pṛthvi. Prakṛti with which the lower creation begins is the assemblage (samaṣṭi) of the dispositions and tendencies (vāsanās) of all persons with various beginningless karmas. It may be fitly described as the body of the karma-dispositions of the jīvas inhering in citi-śakti.

The said dispositions exist in twofold condition, viz. : (i) as avyakta when they lie unmanifest as in dreamless sleep and (ii) as citta when they manifest themselves as in dreams and wakeful stages. In the dreamless state, there can be no experience of pleasure and pain, for mature karmas only can be worked off through experience and others which are not sufficiently ripe are not ready for fructification. Citta is in fact the inner organ (antaḥkarana) which is known under three names according to the triple character of its functions, viz., as ahaṁkāra when it feels the ego-sense, as buddhi when it comes to a decision and manas when it thinks and cogitates within.

Like the Supreme Saṁvit manas has two aspects—prakāśa and vimarśa. Prakāśa represents the resting of the manas on, and its contact with, other objects; and vimarśa consists in mental agitation in regard to that very object caught as a reflection within and expressed in thought as 'it is thus' which involves association with past images stored in the mind. Vimarśa may be fresh as in the case of immediate experience (anubhava) or

old as in the case of memory (smṛti) and mental co-ordination (anusandhāna). Both the later states are due to psychic disposition caused by experience.

The states of consciousness may be classified in the following way. The sleep state (suṣupti), from this point of view, comes under prakāśa—prakāśa of nidrā. It is a form of nirvikalpaka-jñāna. It endures for some time and is regarded as a state of insentiency (muḍha-daśā) due to the absence of vimarśa. It is pure prakāśa. The waking state (jāgrat) on the other hand is of the nature of vimarśa and is not a state of insentiency. Thus after a continuous state of consciousness free from images (vikalpas) in dreamless sleep there arises during the subsequent state of waking a series of images.

In sleep the prakāśa aspect of the manas remains, but vimarśa lapses. This is why manas is usually described as being dissolved in that state. Similarly manas is in a state of dissolution when an outer object is just seen.

Citta is really the self as directed towards the knowable objects. In sleep the manas, being free from images, remains quiet and motionless. Its momentary modifications being absent, it is said to be dissolved. Such a state is discernible in each of the following conditions :—

1) Nirvikalpaka Samādhi—when the pure self remains established in its self-luminous essence.
2) Sleep—when the unmanifested or the great void is revealed.
3) Vision of an object when there is prakāśa or revelation of the external object through the usual sense-object contact.

In all these different states there is an apparent similarity of concentrated prakāśa due to the non-manifestation of vimarśa in the form 'it is thus' (śābdānubhava). Though the same prakāśa underlies all the states, the states themselves are not identical, in as much as the subsequent vimarśa expressed in the form of mental co-ordination (anusandhāna) is different in each case. Thus the vimarśa immediately after *samadhi* assumes the form "I was silent during this time", after *sleep* it is expressed 'I knew nothing during this time', but in *vision* of an external object it

takes the form 'It was such an object'. The difference in vimarśa is not explicable except on the assumption of some sort of difference in the objects concerned. But it does not destroy the unity of the essence, viz., freedom from images or verbal associations in the three states in question. The difference on the object-side is as follows : the object in samādhi is *pure self* unmixed with the form of visible body, etc., the object in sleep is *avyakta* or the unmanifest which is an external formless thing, and the object in vision is an external substance with peculiar features as distinguishable from others. Hence though the objects (bhāṣya) are different, the bare consciousness or awareness (bhāsa) which is common to all is one and the same and is undifferentiated. In other words, though the objects of samādhi, nidrā and vision are different from one another, the consciousness in which they are revealed is one. This shows that difference in objects cannot produce any corresponding difference in consciousness or the essence (svarūpa). Difference in essence is possible only through reflection which is absent in all the three cases, as they are equally of the nature of mere awareness.

Samādhi and sleep being of longer duration are capable of being thought about (vimṛṣṭa) in subsequent moments, but the case of vision of an object is different because it is momentary. In the same manner momentary samādhi and sleep cannot be made an appropriate object of vimarśa.

View Point of Earlier Agamas[*1]

According to the earlier Ágamas, the supreme Śakti, the instrument of the transcendent Śiva in all its activities, is the totality of all the tattvas. Within this supreme Śakti the entire universe lies hidden.

The said supreme Śakti is sometimes described as 'amākalā'[*2] of which we have already mentioned. We have shown in that con-

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[*1] This view point is taken from an article entitled 'Sakta Philosophy' by M. M. Gopinath Kaviraj, published in 'History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western': (George Allen & Unwin), for which I am indebted to the writer.

[*2] We have already mentioned it in connection with the description of the 'Brahmarandhra' pp. 39.

nection that every form of the universe, whether a subject or an object or an instrument of knowledge, is identical with the said amākalā, though it may be made to appear as different from it. The determinate prakāśa in each form implies the difference. Saṁvit is full and self-contained. Its supreme creative act is to be distinguished from the later creative processes, as it means 'the projection of the self out of itself and into itself'. As the source of creation is not anything extraneous to the self, the latter is the efficient as well as the material cause (upādāna) of the effect. Creation takes place within the self and not within space and time different from it. What is projected or created is also not anything other than the self. Thus every object in the universe, inner or outer, is of the form of the self. The projection is of the nature of multiple ābhāsas (appearances) manifested as both inner and outer things. Saṁvit thus gradually appears as the different letter-sounds in its process of materialization. These are the multiple forms assumed by visarga, the outermost being called 'ha'. The visarga which is only 'ha' without manifestation is described in some treatises (e.g., *Kulagahavara*) as the principle of *Kama* or *Unrestricted Will.* As there is no real difference between the visarga and the objective world, it is not possible to assume a causal relation between them—the visarga itself appears as the vācya and the vācaka. Infinite manifestation is in the essence of visarga, though it does not produce any real multiplicity. The Supreme Śakti, as being responsible for this manifold appearance such as delight (ānanda), will (icchā), knowledge (jñāna) and action (kriyā), is the hidden spring of the visarga.*[1]

'The Transcendent or Anuttara ('A') by means of visarga (upto 'Ha' or prāṇa) reveals itself in Śakti and returns to itself and abides in the indivisible Prakāśa, which is its own eternal self, called Bindu (M)—AHAM. This is how in the Universal Consciousness*[2] which is no better than bare awareness, there arises a sense of 'I'. Its relation to the non-self or body is

*[1] *Tantraloka* III, 136-148

*[2] Compare the Concept of Universal Consciousness, pp. 50.

an event in time, which is psychologically analysable. The ego-sense in pure Consciousness reveals it as one's own (svātman). This unity of Śiva-Śakti follows logically from the integrity or oneness. This is the secret of fullness of ego or *Purna-ahanta*.

It is a truism that Saṁvit is first changed into Prāṇa before the regular course of subsequent creation, represented by the emergence of the first principles or Tattvas, can possibly take place.

The universe of Experience consists of a number of Bhuvanas or planes of life and consciousness made up of Tattvas. In the Śaiva-Śākta Ágamas thirtysix Tattvas are recognised, out of which twentyfour, counted from below, are considered as impure, the next seven as mixed and the remaining five as pure. In this scheme Prakṛti (24) marks the end of the impure, Māyā (31) that of the mixed and Śiva (36) that of pure Tattva. Each Tattva has a series of Bhuvanas attributed to it.* The Bhuvanas inspite of their mutual differences in detail have the common characteristics of the Tattvas concerned, though it is recognised in the Pātanjala school that everything is found everywhere (Sarvam Sarvātmakam). The Bhuvanas are abodes of living beings endowed with bodies and organs made up of the substances the materiality of which corresponds to the nature of karmas and jñānas and the degree of their perfection. The Bhuvana of the Pṛthvī-tattva represents the sphere known as Brahmāṇḍa, the Bhuvanas of the tattvas upto Prakṛti form the Prakṛtyaṇḍa, those of Māyā represent the Māyāṇḍa and Śakti beyond Māyā is Śaktyaṇḍa.

The divine attributes of the self are all diminished in the atomic condition when cit appears as citta. Of the well-known impurities or malas, recognised by the Śaiva-Śākta system of thought, this is the first, called 'āṇava'. This is the state of paśu in

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*For Tattvas and Bhuvanas related to them, see *Mrgendra-Agama*, Vidyapada, pp. 344-456, ed. Krishna Shastri and Subramanya Shastri ; *Bhoga-Karika* by Sadyojoti, pp. 109-13 ; *Ratna-traya*, pp. 89-118 ; *Matrika-cakra-viveka, IV*, pp. 86-93 ; *Elements of Hindu Iconography* (Pt. II), pp. 329—97 ; by T. A. Gopinath Rao.

which the sense of limitation is first manifested. The limitation makes possible the rise of vāsanās, as a result of which the assumption of physical body for a certain length of time becomes necessary to work off the vāsanās through experience. These vāsanās constitute kārmika-mala. The māyīya-mala is the name given to the source of the triple body, namely—(i) the causal or the kalā-śarīra, (ii) the subtle, the puryaṣṭaka i.e. the tattva-śarīra, and (iii) the gross elemental, i.e., the bhuvanaja śarīra. In fact, everything which is revealed in our experience as knowable for objective comes under the māyīya-mala. The function of this impurity is to show an object as different from the subject (svarūpa). All the principles from Kalā down to Pṛthvī represent the fetters of Māyā, i.e., Pāśas. These give shape to body, senses, bhuvanas and bhāvas, etc., for completing the experience of the soul.*1 The āṇava is twofold according as it refers to the loss of pure ahamtā in the self or to the appearance of impure ahamtā in the same. The self loses svātantrya and retains bodha or it loses bodha and retains svātantrya. Māyīya-mala is sometimes expressed as bheda representing the appearance of multiplicity in the unity. It consists of Māyā and thirtyone Tattvas produced from it. Karma-mala is *adrsta* and may be regarded either as merit or as demerit (puṇya-pāpa). In different texts the meanings of malas are sometimes found to be slightly different. Hence what is popularly known as saṁsāra extends from Pṛthvī up to Kalā; and not beyond that. These three impurities always persist in the individual soul.*2

Sakta View of Experience—Analysed

Experience, in the Tantras, specially of the Śāktaic character, may be considered from the point of view of the principle of polarity which is now acceptable to physics, biology and psychology. This principle may be ascertained both in its original and derivative forms.

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*1 As regards three malas, see *Pratyabhijna-hrdaya,* pp. 21 & 22 ; *Saubhagya-bhaskara,* pp. 95 ; *Siva-Sutra-Vartika* (1-2-3) ; *Siva-Sutra-Vimarsini* (1.2.3).

*2 For different kinds of individual selves see Chapter IV, Tantras: Ways of Realization or Freedom.

There is a technical term in the Tantras, viz., 'ṣaḍadhvan', which means 'six-ways' and it is further said that those who have understood this 'ṣaḍadhvan' have realised the secret of the Tantras. This we have already mentioned.*

Further, Tantra is primarly a way of realization in which experience is viewed both as *niskala* i.e., beyond nāda-bindu -kalā (the primary triad or tṛika) and all their derivatives as represented in the six steps (ṣaḍadhvan) and as *sakala* which is its own divine nature to be and become all. This has also been referred. It should be noted here that the said reference has been made from the point of descending order only, but in the Tantras descent and ascent go side by side. Now let us see how such process works in the ascendent.

The aforesaid nāda-bindu complex is the a-logical integral and kalā being basically the nature aspect is already implicit in the whole but as partial it develops later on. The third and last polarity is bhuvana and pada and the cosmic descent apparently stops there and gathers momentum, as a result 'everything is infused with power; what was in *that* is in *this* also—the whole undiminished glory of cosmic life and consciousness, joy and harmony'. That Citi-Śakti pervades the entire universe becomes intelligible here. She has involved Herself in this plane of Bhuvana and Pada. By completing its evolution, it can work out the realization of its inherent perfectness and divinity. For this, 'it must be able to reverse the gear of the whole working apparatus, individuals as well as environmental. In other words, that must be made from the reactive plane of some experience and expression (Bhuvana and Pada) of the dynamic realm of inherent principles (Tattvas) and natural function-form (Mantra), Yantra, and Tantra and from these to the highest levels of cosmic partials and Mātṛkās, (Kalā and Varṇa), which together weave a grand and seamless pattern of cosmic harmony'. This is the positive upward trend of Sadāśiva as distinguished from the negative downward trend involving the world of sense. 'From partials (Kalā) and Mātṛkās one must press forward toward the unspeakable mystery beyond

*See page 34, Tantras— a General Study.

—the mystery of Bindu and Nāda. It is the setu or link connecting the Supreme Experience in which magnitude (Pada) and measure (Mātrā) are absorbed with another way of that experience where they recognise each other's close union. Tantras and Upaniṣads—in fact all types of mystic experience—therefore, speak in symbols and paradoxes.'

The Śaiva Ágamas trace the devolution of the ultimate reality (Śiva-Śakti—Śiva's own nature) through thirtysix Principles* (Tattvas as they have been called), among which are the twentyfour Tattvas of Sāṁkhya reaching the peak in Prakṛti (the equilibrium plane of the three cosmic factors of presentation, movement and veiling). Below the plane are three factors such as sattva, rajas and tamas, yielding three inner instruments, viz., buddhi (understanding), ahaṁkāra (self-reference) and manas (apprehending and desiring). Beyond Prakṛti there is Puruṣa as the individual soul (jīvātmā), also sometimes called *citta,* appreciating and reacting to the presentation of nature (Prakṛti). The individual is subject to the five restrictive factors, he is therefore apūrṇa (imperfect). These five factors are, therefore, above him and he must work up so as to outgrow them.

Next in order comes Māyā which measures out all that is held by and within him, but Māyā is also primarily responsible for the non-realization of the fact that the creation (jagat) is in reality Śiva-Śakti. She makes the world appear as other than Brahman. All knowledge, all perception within the net of Māyā, is therefore impure (aśuddha) and in that sense unreal. Above and beyond Māyā is Śuddha-vidyā (pure knowledge). In this and at the base of this is Īśvara, the Lord of creation, who appropriates and ordains all as *this* (idam). Here we reach the root of any act or process of objectification and of expression. 'The same Īśvara-tattva, regarded as 'All-I' (not to be confounded with the inner instrument called ahaṁkāra) is the root and pre-condition of any act or process of subjectificatiion and of ingression. As such He is the Śadāśiva-tattva. Next comes Śakti-

* In sum, the thirty-six Principles are the twenty-four Tattvas of Samkhya, then Purusa, then five restrictive factors (kancukas), Maya ; then Suddha-Vidya. Isvara. Sadasiva. Sakti-tattva and Siva-tattva.

tattva which combines in Herself the roots of aham and idam and contains in Herself all that may shoot out and evolve. She is Śiva's own desire (kāma) 'to be and become.' Śakti is what projects, subjectively and objectively, everything as Nāda-Bindu and Kalā and again absorb all in Her. Śakti as identified with Parama Śiva is the finest and the first Principle which is otherwise called the Absolute.

Mysticism of the Tantras*

Experience in the Tantras may be viewed from the mystical point of view, for, Tantra is sometimes characterised as Rahasya Śāstras (mystical treatises). Mysticism ordinarily lies in the unfoldment of psychical states of different centres of our being such as willing, thinking and feeling, culminating in the synthetic unity of the self.

According to the Tantras there are different grades of consciousness working through the different layers of being. The modern psychological distinction between the conscious and the unconscious is anticipated in the Tantras. The unconscious in the Tantras covers within itself not only the total range of consciousness but also that which goes beyond the ordinary reach of consciousness i.e., the superconscious and the cosmic-conscious.

In between the different layers of consciousness there runs a luminous thread and when the thread is directly felt in its entirety the whole existence in its occult nature stands revealed both vertically and horizontally. That each individual has an individuality and history of his own the occultist is aware of. Following the law of correspondence, the occultist in moments of deep absorption can see and feel the subtle functioning of consciousness anywhere in the universe. Though knowledge as or jñāna forms the central point in the Tantras, especially in the Śaivāgamas, such jñāna is never divorced from spiritual act.

* For this idea I am indebted to late Dr. Mahendra Nath Sarkar. He had special taste in the mystical side of the Tantrika Sadhana. I had the privilege of discussing with him the mysticism of the tantras and hence, the idea discussed here is to a greater extent his contribution.

It unfolds the concrete being of man in its different cakras*[1] working the individual self and traces out consciousness immanent in them. The unfolding of sheaths*[2] acquaint us with the forces working in us. But the usefulness of the Tantras lies in exhibiting and almost demonstrating the composition of our being and ultimately discovering the spirit in its formative force and transcendence. The spiritual act in the Tantras is direct, i.e., not to proceed by a philosophical pre-possession, but by a direct spiritual intuition by probing deep into the mysteries of our being. By this way it has been possible for the Tantras to discover the physical, bio-physical, vital-mental, mental-psychical, psychical and spiritual forces of our being. In psychical life the two processes of inwardness and outwardness go together; the normal law of life is the alternation of contemplation and activity. But the full spiritual development is possible when all the centres become activated by the force that is generated in contemplation. The Tantras, therefore, take the boldest course to develop the full intensity of consciousness in psychic centres and to establish a correspondence between them and the wider reaches of being. The definite object Tantras intend to have is to free consciousness from its ego-centric impulsion and to release its cosmic play.

The emergence of the psychic removes the barrier which restricts our vision and makes knowledge direct and penetrating. It presents before us what is hidden in nature and man and becomes the source of the infusion of the Divine in us. This is greatly helped by the ascent through the graded experience as indicated by the six centres (ṣaṭ cakras) in the Tantras and subsequently by the forces of descent from mental to sub-conscient.

Psychic knowledge has its concreteness too. It gives the complete texture as well as the details of Being. Its greatest efficacy lies in working out a living correspondence between the inner forces and the outer cosmic powers. It presents a living

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*[1] In the Tantras human body is divided into six centres and each bodily centre is considered as a centre of consciousness. The said six bodily centres of consciousness are technically called *Sat Cakras*. They are as follows :-

1) Mulādhāra, 2) Svādhisthānā, 3) Manipuru, 4) Anāhata, 5) Visuddha and 6) Ājnā

*[2] Already mentioned in the sense of kancuka (limitations).

synthesis in place of conceptual analysis. Naturally, it extends beyond philosophic speculation, if by philosophy is meant merely mental construction.

This psycho-synthesis is naturally an advance on mental synthesis. Psycho-synthesis is the new knowledge that the Tantras afford us by over-stepping the vital-mental experience. It extends beyond itself to still higher knowledge in transcendence. This is the real spiritual consummation which is reached when we get at the root of existence.

It thus appears that there is a continuous thread of psychic connection between all the strata of our experience, such as vital, mental and spiritual, and their combinations. If the luminous insight into the different strata of our existence is attained, the whole existence stands revealed before our knowledge including all the forces that are determining, furthering or restricting our evolution. The spiritual order becomes clearly manifest to us. The Tantras in emphasising the psychic revelation envisage a new evolution of man and consummation of spirituality even far beyond that.

Psychic life has its elasticity. It can easily expand and contract itself. It is more plastic than mind and has quicker formation than mind. The mental formations are free within a limited range. They have their own laws which they cannot transcend. The mind, in other words, is hedged round by the limitation of space and time. They are true in so far as evolution is confined to its present height. The finer evolution of psychic being shows that the barrier of space and time is not absolute.

'The mind cannot picture space in its undividedness and time in its integrity. Psychic intuition oversteps the barrier of space and time. The division of time as past, present and future disappears, and the unrolling of existence in time appears as a myth. There is no division of the past, the present and the future. The past glides into the present, the present into the future, none can say how and when. Time in the empirical sense, then, is the creation of the mind through memory and anticipation. With the psychic contraction and expansion time-limitation is transcended. Such transcendence gives us the greater freedom and explains what is philosophically conceived by the Western

Absolutists in terms of actuality'. For in that state time passes into a timeless perception in the wide comprehensive consciousness. The idea of motion also vanishes with time. Motion is always relative to two points in space and time. When consciousness becomes wide enough to reflect simultaneously the two points, the ideas of time and motion lapse altogether. The distant points are then perceived simultaneously. They are reflected at the same moment and at the same centre. It should be noted here that life-force is related to time, when it is on the point of expression; when it is contracted into an equilibrium it has no connection with time. In this state our whole experience points to a limitless existence. The mystic claims such experience by psychic contraction and expansion. Ordinarily Śaivism accepts time in the empirical as one of the subjective limitations inherent in the individual (puruṣa).

'Timeless perception' may mean two things. First, it may mean the vanishing of time completely. Emphasis is laid on this kind of consciousness in mysticism. It stresses that time is transcended in absolute stillness. This, in the terminology of the Tantras, is the quietude of Parama-Śiva. Secondly, 'timeless perception', may also mean freedom (svātantrya-śakti), beyond the triple division of time, in terms of the presentation of ceaseless continuity. This is the supramental time-consciousness beyond the mental perception of time. The supramental consciousness of time presents time in its transcendent and creative formation without any break in its continuity. It is a timeless perception of the process of time in its creativity and integrity. In some way time moves on the wings of eternity, levelling down the individuality of moments and fusing them in one sweeping whole. 'Mysticism is the re-assertion of consciousness in its freedom from spatial and temporal limitations.'

Philosophers who are committed to thinking that knowledge implies subject-object relation can neither see the truth nor appreciate the value of the aforesaid experience. The overcoming of all the usual barriers between the individual and the absolute is a great accomplishment. Some realists find an apparent inconsistency in this statement. They hold that when all is dissolved in oneness there is none to be aware of this oneness. This is

a commonplace criticism. But it should here be borne in mind that the knowledge of identity in question is no ordinary knowledge in the sense of subject-object relation. Even if the relation may drop there is knowledge. It is a higher type of consciousness by sympathy. The absorption of the subject in the object enables us to see more of the object than to represent it in our consciousness by a relation. Indeed, the usual working of our mind is so preoccupied by the subject-object relation that in normal experience no side of the relation is suspended—this is natural and common. The mysticism of the Tantras affirms, on the other hand, that evolution of super-consciousness makes knowledge by identity normal. And that requires a fine development of psychic consciousness. The Tāntrika mystics claim that such knowledge is possible if only we develop in us a deep sense of compassion.

'Spirituality in the Tantras commences with the theistic attitude. It is natural. For the spiritual life is evoked by the inner sense of helplessness and the urge for greater and wider existence, the constant demand for the realization of the finer values of life and above all the sense of security and freedom against the constant uncertainties of fleeting experiences.' The sense of religiosity in the sense of rituals has a demand to rise above the normal life of limitations, for the yearning souls to resolve all grades of experience into an all-absorbing consciousness. The purely religious self sees God and nothing else, God in nature, in individual self and everywhere. Moreover, theism idealises our normal experience and advocates the immanence of God in everything. Some form of pyschic opening develops in the individual self when it goes beyond what is called intellectual understanding.

Further, the Tantras are not committed to conceptual thinking alone. Their approach is through experience in all its grades, from the movement of the force in the animate world upto the supra-cosmic via cosmic levels. The importance of the Tantras in the Indian system of thought lies in tracing out the fountain-source, the basic creative power, and its formation in the different planes of existence. Truth is envisaged in the Tantras not through the forms of thought alone but through the ever-

growing cosmic experience.

The Tantras do not go to the extreme of making the process a reality. The dynamic ingress and egress have a reference to transcendental consciousness of Being. That is the fixed point in our existence and consciousness which nothing can hide.

The Tantras follow the supreme revelation of word of the ordering scheme, immanent in its creative effort. Such revelation emerges out of intuitive realization verified at each stage of expression by experience. It, therefore, does not suffer from the uncertainties of intellectual efforts. 'Metaphysics, in the ordinary sense, is the intellectual skill to map out the whole range of existence, but it invariably suffers limitations, for in measuring the depths of existence it builds up a scheme of thought.' The art of system-making is the sure process of intellectual satisfaction, but its narrowness becomes evident with the new achievements in the widening of experience. 'As experience grows deep, facts intensely interesting and supremely delicate make their appearance and the interest is thus directed from the ordinary self-conscious seeking to the superconscious revelation'. And led by this urge, the Tantras follow a path which opens up new vistas of wider life and finer consciousness. Naturally, here the envisagement of truth follows from the art of life, for art is the process or the method of unfoldment. Truth is imannent in life and when life is finely attained and nobly modulated, truth is revealed. The Tāntrika Mystics naturally do not follow the speculative method alone but the immanent urge of 'being' to grow in its wake. Our conscious life is no complex that it is not possible to draw inspiration from only one of its dominant notes and expressions. Such is the case when we depend solely on analytic intellect. In the Tantras the inherent contradictions in our integral nature have been emphasized. Tāntrika mysticism does not envisage truth or reality by cutting itself adrift from life, 'but by insisting upon life both in creative emergence and self-withdrawing process.' In this process it can see the whole movement of life which imparts better knowledge than by understanding.

The aim of the Tantras is not to present a theoretical philosophy alone, it supplies us with the richness of experience giving

us the real wisdom of the whole span of life in its graded expression and point of its being in every stage of its manifestation. Philosophy or religion as intellectual illumination or just spiritual aspiration does not carry us far to make our concrete life full and beautiful. The Tantras, on the other hand, being a super-science of the spirit, not only quicken the process of evolution, both in the cosmic and the individual, but also help gaining mastery over the forces composing us so as to make spiritual re-making possible.

Transcendental Character of Reality

The Tantras emphasise the integralness of acting. Activity is no mere category or concept but refers to the transcendental creativity of the fontal power. 'It is not the conscious-will of the German Idealists nor the transcendent subjectivity of the super-conscious. The transcendent activity is not a category of 'thought-determination' and hence it is free and indeterminate in its expression'. Spirit is spontaneous activity, and reason plays its part when it is objectified in the realm of ideas. The world of ideas and concepts is true in a definite sphere but, reality, transcends that and operates in its own indeterminate way. In Whitehead, the primordial reality acquires definiteness and rises into organism which represents a high degree of truth. To Whitehead actuality is higher than potentiality, for there it gets definitely concretised knowledge—to him it has always a definite meaning in a definite setting; when there is lack of definiteness nothing is left behind but only a potentiality. Naturally, actuality is a higher degree of reality. According to him, "Nature is the locus of organism in the progress of development. The so-called locus is a process in which art transcending to which we aspire is displayed in the cosmic scale." This act is involved in original creativity. There is no end of the creative process. In the Tantras, on the other hand, there is the inverted movement towards the primordial creativity and the original equilibrium. 'There is the poise beyond the creative rhythm, there is an ascent along with a descent.'

The dynamic aspect of reality is called Śakti in the Tantras, and Māyā in Advaita Vedānta. Śakti brings out its energising

character and Māyā its limiting character—the principle of individuation. This principle of individuation is the principle of self-limitation. The self-individuating principle, according to Kāśmira Śaivism, is inherent in the ultimate reality, Śiva; to Advaita Vendānta it is only seemingly inherent in the Absolute (Brahman). This marks the difference between them. (Only when associated with Śakti, Śiva has the power to create; without Śakti Śiva cannot even stir.)*

Abhinava Gupta, in his *Pratyabhijna-hrdaya,* accepts a non-differential state of being. This non-differential state is not the transcendent Brahman of Advaita Vedānta, for the state of creativity is to him real. Ultimate reality is integral, not by denying the process of concretising but by assimilating it. To distinguish his trans-conceptual system from Advaita Vedānta point of view, he calls it Parama Advaita. It does introduce the integral character of existence by completely assimilating the conscious act. It is an integral awareness which does not admit of any relation and naturally transcends the relation of a logical system. Abhinava Gupta is clear on this point, though he characterises the ultimate existence as *sunyata* which is, in other words, *purnata.* The difference between the Advaita-Vedāntic Monism and the Parama Advaita of Tāntricism is a matter of emphasis on the principle of Identity. In both the systems there is the removal of root-ignorance which introduces differential concepts of actuality and reality, and recognition too of the self as identical with the trans-conceptual reality—recognition, because there is temporary forgetfulness. The recognition is the recovery of the lost ground. Only, which in the one it establishes the dynamic identity in which the recognition process is ceaselessly active, in the other it gives way to the established fact beyond recognition—recognition there is the intermediary step towards the final realization. In the Pratyabhijñā school recognition is assimilated as an element in the immediate dynamic awareness. This makes the distinction clear between the position of Advaitists and Tāntricists (Kāśmīra Śaivism). Immediacy of awareness is presented in both. Naturally, no relational and

*cf. *Ananda-lahari* of Samkarācārya.

conceptual sense can subsist anywhere, for the aspirant is to rise above the conceptual limitation of thought and to realise identity with the basic existence of reality.

It should be noted here on the precise nature of the identity of Śiva and Śakti there has been a considerable metaphysical discussion. Bhāskara Rai, Rāmeśvara, Lakṣmīdhara and other writers and commentators have stoutly defended the non-duality of Śiva and Śakti. In the Tantras in general Śakti is distinguishable from Śiva only in conventional and theoretical analysis, but in realization She is identical with Śiva. If Śiva is Brahman, Śakti is Brahma-mayī. Now, should this relation be called non-duality or not? Mahānirvāna-Tantra says—'Some say it is advaita, others say it is dvaita, others say it is dvaitādvaita-vivarjita—but it is neither the one nor the other. It is beyond the reach of measure and nothing numerical pertains to it.'

As to the illusoriness of the world of appearance, the position is that the question does not arise at all. 'Even the world as appearance is she and none other, and it is only by a dispensable convention, a certain form of definition and notation only, that one can maintain a dialectical hiatus between the world as appearance and reality.' In reality, the world is Śiva as Śakti. 'The object of realization in Śākta Tantra is to prove that the relation is first an equation and the equation is ultimately an identity.' 'The method is not purging or emptying one of the other, but perfecting and realizing one into the integrated whole of the other.' Niṣkala or pure Consciousness is the changeless background and the changing world is its own show by itself, and to itself, as Śakti. This prepares the ground for the pre-eminently practical and essentially realistic and synthetic approach of the Śākta Tantras.

CHAPTER IV

TANTRAS : WAYS OF REALIZATION : FREEDOM

Introduction

Within the limited space of this chapter there is no scope for detailed discussion of the Tāntrika (Śaiva-Śākta) concept of freedom, otherwise called liberation or *moksa*. Our task, therefore, here is to give a brief outline of the said concept and to show some of the salient features of the same with reference to Vīra-Śaivism after the Bāsava tradition, otherwise called 'Liṅgāyat' in addition to the three means* of freedom recognized in the Pratyabhijñā system of the Kāśmīra School of Śaivism.

Ordinarily speaking, liberation is an eternal problem in the sense that it co-exists with human consciousness in terms of reflection. It has direct bearing on the life of every individual human being in whatever station of life he is placed. It assumes different forms in different contexts—social, political, economic and like—and in a sense it culminates in the spiritual, the highest goal of human endeavours. In India, liberation may be conceived both individually and collectively. It may be viewed both in cosmic and acosmic ways. The Vedic ṛṣis and the Upaniṣadic Seers of India have given elaborate description of this problem. They have envisaged fourfold values (Puruṣārthas) of life such as *dharma, artha, kāma and moksa,* and the first three, according to them, are meant for achieving the end, i.e., *moksa* or spiritual freedom.

In India, philosophic quest has arisen out of the necessities of life as felt, while in the West such speculation originated out of a 'sense of wonder'. The culmination of philosophic thinking in India lies in the realization of the concept of freedom—freedom from all sorts of sufferings such as physical, psychical and spiritual. In other words, complete cessation of the very root or source of suffering is the aim the Indian philosophic thinking aspires after. The attitude being basically practical, in India philosophy is always living philosophy or philosophy in

*Sāmbhavopāya, Sāktopāya and Ānavopāya

practice, i.e., its distinctive mark is that it is of service to further right living. It is in this sense that we can speak of religion as one with philosophy in India. Intellectual conviction of the Tattvas is not the final aim that Indian philosophy seeks for; it goes beyond and makes strenuous efforts to attain mokṣa or liberation. In the words of Max Muller, philosophy was recommended in India 'not for the sake of knowledge, but for the highest purpose that man can strive after in this life'. For, in India philosophic endeavour was essentially directed to find out a remedy for the ills of life, and the consideration of metaphysical question came in as a matter of course. In the Kaṭhopaniṣad it is stated, "When all the desires the heart harbours are gone, man becomes immortal and reaches Brahman here". The pursuit of mokṣa as the final aim and the means of achievement through ascetic practices—these are the two elements common to all Indian thought. They point out that philosophy as understood in India is neither mere intellectualism nor mere moralism, but includes and transcends them both.

The different systems of Indian thought posit the concept of freedom in different forms in accordance with the ways of life each system adopts as its ultimate aim. As for illustration, the materialist Cārvāka considers the end of life to be seeking sensual pleasure. Of the four values (already stated) of life recognised in Indian system of thought Cārvāka rejects dharma and mokṣa and accepts artha and kāma as the only values to be pursued. The ideal Cārvāka professes is the ideal of Hedonism on the one hand and scepticism on the other. Advaita Vedānta, on the other hand, considers spiritual freedom (mokṣa) as the only ideal to be followed and the first three as simply empirical having no concern with the spiritual. Similarly, the different Śaiva-Śākta systems of thought have each envisaged in its respective discourse a different ideal of life it professes in accordance with its way of life. It may be said in a general way that the distinctive marks of the said systems of thought lie in their practical outlook, realistic attitude and synthetic approach. Hence, according to them, the world in which we live is real and the aforesaid values can be realised in synthetic form in this our life within this world. They aim at realizing a life of

fullness and perfection.

In the Upaniṣads the relation of the individual self (jīva) to the ultimate reality (Brahman) has been differently conceived. The views may be broadly divided into two—cosmic and acosmic, as we have already mentioned. According to the former the jīva is the actual transformation of Brahman and as such is both identical with and different from Brahman. According to the latter Brahman *appears* as the jīva and is, therefore, not at all different from it. Without entering into the details of this polemic, it may be said that the jīvahood (individuality) of the jīva is constituted by his being forgetful of his identity with Brahman. Ordinarily, it is conceived that the jīva is finite and limited and, therefore, distinct from the Brahman which is unlimited and infinite ; but the individual, while living within the empirical framework, rises, on some rare occasion of reflexion born out of a sense of detachment, above this sense of limitation and ceases to be conscious of his individuality. A single moment of disinterestedness reveals the state of pervasiveness identifiable with the self ; an experience of a blissful instant, sometimes, so to say, *'made eternity'*. The said state of self-transcendence, though very short-lived in our mundane lives, suggests, according to the Upaniṣads, that the jīva is not in reality the limited physico-psychical entity as ordinarily taken to be. This question is dealt with in what is called 'the Doctrine of Koṣas' in the Taittirīya Upaniṣad. The unique experience characterising this self-transcendent state is represented there as higher than the experience of the conscious (manomaya) and self-conscious (vijñānamaya) levels of life, because the conflicts and confusions typical of them are overcome in it; and it is described as 'ānandamaya'. The first two are called 'annamaya' and 'prāṇamaya'—the former, which is the outermost of the koṣas, being the body of the material covering of the jīva and standing for the physical side of the individual existence the latter representing the vital or the organic side of it, but not in any way identifiable with mokṣa. It should be noted here that though the attitude induced by the contemplation of art reveals self-forgetfulness and peace of mind, it is only a characteristic way towards mokṣa ; it stands midway between common ex-

perience and mokṣa where alone the soul's true nature is fully revealed.

Now let us say something about the individual self (jīva). The derivative meaning of the word 'jīva' is 'that which continues breathing'. The name gives prominence to one of the two aspects of life's activities, viz., the biological or unconscious, such as breathing, which goes on even when the mind is quiescent in deep sleep. The Upaniṣads use two other terms for the soul, viz., bhoktā (experient) and kartā (agent), which together emphasise another, viz., the psychological or the conscious aspect of life's activity.

Every soul is conditioned by these two factors throughout its empirical existence. Body, prāṇa and manas—these three together form a sort of empirical home for the soul. The conscious side of the soul's activities is carried on by the manas, and as the manas is the central organ of consciousness its function may, however, widely differ. According to the aforesaid cosmic way of understanding the relation between the world and the individual, of unity and diversity, moral efforts and religious practices, nothing is unreal and everything has its proper place in the scheme of the universe.

According to the acosmic ideal, both the unity and the diversity are equally unreal. But even in that view evil disappears the moment the unity is realised, which means that there is no difference between the two teachings so far as the problem of ethics is concerned.

Freedom according to Vira-Saivism

The Liṅgāyata creed of Vīra Śaivism in line with the Bāsava tradition lays special stress on consciousness as power (śakti) symbolised as 'liṅga'. The word 'liṅga' is derived from two roots, 'li' which means 'to dissolve' and 'gam' which means 'to evolve or go out'. Metaphysically speaking, all the processes of creation, sustenance, dissolution, concealment and bestowal of grace are enacted by this power. The dynamic aspect of consciousness together with the static aspect of Being as such, otherwise called 'Sthala', finds its fullest expression in such consciousness. In the spiritual, Liṅga represents dynamic fullness and

ceaseless egress and ingress of consciousness in point of time and beyond, in the planes of the vital, mental and supra-mental. It moves both in ascending and descending orders through the body and its six centres and eventually reaches the Supreme, the plane of Great Expansion (Mahāvyāpti) and helps communion with the Absolute, only to reinstal what lies embeded in phenomenal. It is a sort of great synthesis arrived at through the integration of the vital, mental and the spiritual. Phenomenologically speaking, Vīra Śaivism analyses consciousness and its different grades, both in the objective and subjective setting, in line with the evolution of the same in a comprehensive scale, i.e., evolution of consciousness together with all its ramifications and involutions taken there into consideration. Epistemologically speaking, it is a form of cognition of what is already cognised i.e., Recognition.

Further, Freedom, according to the Liṅgāyata sect of Vīra Śaivism is neither complete merging of the self into the Absolute nor a state of nirvikalpaka samādhi arrived at through the Pātañjala system of yoga, nor the acquisition of supernormal powers (bibhūtis), nor a state of kaivalya gained through knowledge of discrimination between cit and acit, but a state of spiritual fullness and perfection realised through the awakening of vital energy or prāṇa-śakti in the individual and evolving it both in ascending and descending orders, culminating in a great spiritual descent and communion with the entire universe. Such awakening of consciousness starts from the vital-mental and, through its integration, reaches the spiritual and finally ends in the supra-mental, but the ceaseless flow of the Spirit moves on in a spiral way and descends on the earth-consciousness. The mechanism of earth then becomes divinely modulated and spiritually saturated. The individual human beings are transformed into atomic centres of consciousness, and the heavenly choir without and the tiny self within—the objective and the subjective—get integrated into a state of divinity where there is no scope for antinomy. In such a state complete harmony and bliss reign everywhere and this so-called mortal earth is transformed into heaven.

According to the Liṅgāyata school of Vīra Śaivism, the

sense of awareness (vimarsa as cit) lies inherent in the Existence as Being (Sat) in a state of identity, otherwise called 'Sāmarasya', i.e., being of the same nature, just as heat and light co-exist in fire and the sun. It may be objected here that such a relation involves a subtle distinction between Consciousness as Essence (Śakti) and Reality as Existence, i.e., the Possessor of Śakti (Śākta). Epistemically, such a distinction may be expressed in a semi-judgmental form like 'heat of fire', 'light of the sun' and the like, which is not inconceivable. But from the point of view of Reality in the spiritual, such a distinction is not admitted by the Liṅgāyata sect of philosophers. According to this sect, attribute is not different from substance—the substantive 'that' finds its fullest expression in the adjectival 'what'—in other words, the burning power of fire is not different from fire ; fire expresses itself in its burning power. According to this system, both substance and attribute in an organic unity refer to Reality in terms of Spirit which pervades the entire universe in its different layers. *Siddhanta Sikhamani* speaks of Śakti as Brahmaniṣṭha Sanātanaī. It is clear from this that Consciousness as Śakti is intrinsic and ever-abiding in Śiva; and hence Śakti is characterised and distinguished by Her power of Self-Consciousness and the power to create wonders. This is a form of unity (advaita) as qualified by Śakti (Śakti-viśiṣta), and the whole notion is called Śakti-viśiṣṭa-advaita-vāda. It is true that the Pratyabhijñā School of Kāśmira Śaivism also upholds the predominance of Śakti in its theory of Recognition, but it does not express it in so many words. The Vīra Śaiva philosophers of the Liṅgāyata sect are bold enough to express this system as Śakti-viśiṣṭa-advaita-vāda.

It would not be out of place to mention in this connection what we exactly mean by the term 'māyā' which has been used differently in different contexts in the Śaiva-Śākta systems of thought. A celebrated Śākta sādhaka is stated to have defined māyā as the form of the formless. Reality is formless and that which is formless goes beyond relation, and hence nothing can be attributed to Reality. Now what do we exactly mean by 'beyond' in 'beyond relation'? It may be used in two senses—(a) including or wider than relation and (b) having no relation

at all. The Tāntrika School of Śākta-vāda adopts the first view and Māyāvāda accepts the second view. According to the former, Reality includes the manifestation of infinite types of relation and yet transcends them at the same time. Liberation, in the Śākta view, is not a state of unqualified transcendence but a state of revelation of the essential nature of Reality through the process of becoming.

Pratyabhijna—Freedom

In the creed of the Pratyabhijñā system of Kāśmīra Śaivism spiritual Freedom or Mokṣa signifies essentially Śiva's freedom from His own self-created fetters due to Śakti, with the help of of His own divine grace. Freedom, in this system, does not mean acquisition of something novel hitherto unacquired ; to express it in terms of cognition, it is the cognition of what is already cognised—in other words, Recognition, (Pratyabhijñā) of the essential identity of the individual self (jīva) with his own essential nature, i.e., Śiva. Unlike the Śaiva-Śiddhānta system of the South, and like the Śāktādvaitavāda and Śakti-viśiṣṭa-advaita-vāda of the Liñgāyata sect of Vīra Śaivism of the Bāsava tradition, the Pratyabhijñā system believes that the jīva is Śiva, that, in other words, so long as Śiva remains under the covers of His own self-created malas and pāśas He is the jīva and as jīva he cannot realize his identity with his own essential nature, i.e., with Śiva. It should be noted here that what limit or cover the pristine purity of the self are called malas; and those that restrict both its purity and degree of freedom are called pāśas. With the final maturation of malas (mala-paripāka) the Divine grace descends on the individual self (jīva) all on a sudden, and immediately he realizes his own essence, which is ever present in him. Liberation is not something new to be acquired by the individual self, as we have already stated. It is not merely a state of elimination of covers, for nothing can cover It. (This view holds that everything is *Siva—Sarvam Sivamayam yatah*). Further, it is not a case of any foreign infiltration, for Śiva is immanent everywhere in the universe. To speak in other words, Śiva alone is, there is no second to Him. Liberation has no particular abode to live in.

It never moves anywhere. (Mokṣasya naiva kiñcit dhāmasti, na cāpi gamanam anyatra). Mokṣa may be defined as full-fledged manifestation of Consciousness as Power through the liquidation of the very root of ignorance and arrival at a state of equanimity and perfection. Time cannot measure It, space cannot limit It, and no attribute can tarnish Its purity. No form can determine It, no words can express It. It is ineffable and no proof can be assigned for It. It is beyond categories (tattvas), It is perfect Bliss, and the entire universe is reflected in It as pure 'I'. In this state there is no other sense than the recognition of myself as 'I' in its fullness. Such a conviction brings in immediately the presence of Parameśvara (Śiva-sanniveśa) together with Its power of grace (Anugraha-śakti). Worship (pūjā), recitation of the sacred hymns (mantras), regulative formalities (vidhi), meditation (dhyāna)—nothing is required for such conviction. The state of Freedom is ever awakened in the jīva even in his wakeful state. The sense that 'everything belongs to me, all the powers and pelf are mine' is itself the realization of super-sensible powers, and super-sensible powers are indistinguishable from God, for God is God because of His super-sensible powers. (aiśvaryam Īsvaratvam hi tasya nāsti pṛthaksthitiḥ).

Abhinava Gupta has described the state of mokṣa as : 'Thus by transcending that which causes illusion, the sense of duality in the individual passes away and instead the sense of non-differenced unity ushers in and the individual loses his individuality by realising his own essence and becomes one with the Absolute, just as water mixed with water, milk mixed with milk, loses its individual character and becomes one and the same' (ittham dvaite vikalpe prabhilanghe mohinim māyām, salile salilam, kṣire kṣirami Brahmani layi syāt). In subtle analysis, even the judgement 'Soham' i.e., 'I am He' is not absolutely free from vikalpas—though these two terms 'I' and 'He' are essentially one and identically the same in this context, still the subtle distinction between them cannot be denied. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī in his classic work *Advaita Siddhi* has finally said that when the sense of duality (dvaita aspect) of the very concept of identity (advaita) passes away, the

indeterminate state is achieved.

With this short note about the Pratyabhijñā concept of Freedom let us state three means, called 'Śāmbhava', Śākta and Ánava to achieve It.

If we look around the world, we find different types of individuals according to their respective predispositions, tastes, sense of possessions and the like, and hence the Pratyabhijñā school of Kāśmira Śaivism has postulated different means for the attainment of freedom. Moreover, Tantras, being primarily ways of practical realization, have necessarily to bear in mind the different characters and competencies of different aspirants and seekers after truth. They have, therefore, designed the framework of their theory and practices suitably to the actual conditions prevailing and the evolving stages and states in the soul's journey towards its chosen ends and values.

The object after which the Tantras aspire is the highest and the best which is called in Paraśurāma-kalpa-sūtra 'pūrṇatakhyāti' or 'purna-ahantā', commonly designated as 'mokṣa', i.e., freedom from bondage, as we have already seen.

Sambhava

In the Pratyabhijñā system, as we have seen, three types of individuals, such as sakala, pralayakala and vijñānakala, are admitted and the ways or means of freedom, such as śāmbhava, śākta and ānava, have been prescribed.* The highest of these means is śāmbhava which is meant for the higher order of sādhakas. In this state the sādhaka must first of all listen (śravaṇa) to the teachings of the Ágama (scriptures). While listening he must be self-possessed and calm and brings under control such thoughts as stand detrimental to the steadfastness of *citta,* that is, he is to practise thoughtlessness, so to say. In the second place, the aspirant must forsake the sense of his body and contemplate on the conscious cogniser (cit pramātā) constantly (manana). In that state there is no scope for agitation due to mental cogitation, for the mind then has, as if, lost its

* From the point of view of ācāra these three stages may be characterised as divyācāra, vīrācāra and pasvācāra.

sense of mindingness. References to such a state are found in the sixth chapter of the Gītā, where it is stated 'Ātmasaṁsthān manaḥ kṛtvā na kiñcidapi cintayet'. Vikalpas arise in the mind due to thinking and reflecting, even though there is no scope for impure thoughts (aśuddha vikalpas) to arise in the minds of the higher order of the sādhakas. One can reach this stage through the process of purification of thoughts. In the śāmbhava stage even pure thoughts are to be liquidated. One of the ways of liquidating thoughts is to notice the process of opening out (unmeṣa). That process is to be called 'unmeṣa' in which there arises in the mind some other thoughts while engaged in some one thought.

Thoughts may be completely liquidated if one can practise the art of concentration caused by the gap between one thought and another thought. The sense of freedom the śāmbhava yogin enjoys never loses its fullness in that state. It should be noted here that the place of awareness (bodha) is beyond *citta;* hence freedom in its fullness cannot be realized at the citta level. It can be realized only at the level of awareness (bodha). This state is just preceding the final state of freedom while the sādhaka is alive (jīvan-mukta). There the aspirant (sādhaka) gets installed in a relation of identity with everything in the universe, for he is then above the influence of the māyīya mala which causes multiplicity. He can see everything (physical and psychical) with proper equanimity. Further as the sādhaka has gone beyond the state of individuality (aṇutva) the contracting factors such as kalā, niyati, kāla, rāga and vidyā cannot bind him. Moreover, he has already achieved mastery over the efficacy of mantras, for to reach this stage the aspirant has transcended the stage of śakti as the mantra means (mantropāya) where citta assumes the form of mantra. There is some distinction between the Pātañjala system of yoga and the śāmbhava yoga of the Pratyabhijñā system. As for illustration, dhāraṇā or concentration is defined in the Pātañjala system as 'deśabandhascittasya dhāraṇā', i.e., concentration of citta on a particular point of space; but the Pratyabhijñā system holds that since everything is Śiva, everywhere Śiva pervades, and hence according to this system there is no question of selection of any

particular point of space to concentrate upon. On the contrary, the Pratyabhijñā system holds that wherever the mind goes that is to be taken as the proper place of concentration (yatra yatra mano yāti, tatra tatraiva dhārayet, calitvā kutra gantāsi sarvam śivamayam yataḥ). The śāmbhava yogin never deviates from his essential nature; he is always intimately united with Śiva even when he physically moves. There are various stages of Samprajñāta Samādhi of the Pātañjala system of yoga of which *asmita* is the final stage. With the lapse of the final trace of individuality (asmitā), the asamprajñāta state steps in. This is an indeterminate state (nirvikalpaka-avasthā) and in this state the question of subject and the object to be contemplated upon does not arise at all. But in the Śāmbhava yoga the prime object to be realized is the pure subject as 'I' in its fullness as freedom (ahaṁ-svātantrya). I am Śiva (Śivoham), I am full (Pūrṇoham)—such consciousness is ever shining there. This is the condition precedent to the realization of the self as full i.e., as 'Pūrṇoham'. The content of realization in this state is expressed in judgments like 'I am eternally free', 'I am omniscient', 'I am omnipotent and there is nothing to check my power' and the like. Sādhakas of the lower grade, according to this system, practise breathing (prāṇayāma) to awaken the Serpent-power (Kuṇḍalinī-śakti) lying embeded in the individual self. The Śāmbhava yogin does not need such practices, for Consciousness is ever awakened in him, he remains the same in different states such as wakeful, sleep, dreamless sleep, tūrīya and beyond; he enjoys lordliness everywhere (tritaya-bhoktā vīreśa) and enjoys everything as full of bliss. The world is then no other than "He Himself in his cosmic form", or, in other words, he and the entire universe are then as if one and identical. This stage is beyond the fourth stage (i.e., tūrīya). In the jīvanmukta stage, i.e., when one enjoys freedom while living, the worldly objects remain as they are; but for the śāmbhava yogin everything is full of Śiva or Śivamaya, i.e., there is nothing other than and independent of Śiva, as we have already said. When the physical body becomes extinct the seeker after truth achieves the indeterminate state (nirvikalpaka-avasthā). Ácarya Saṁkara maintains that even when the attachment for worldly objects

has been burnt to ashes the realised self carries the embodied form due to 'prāravdha' in the final stage also. With the elimination of the covers due to Māyā, the Śāmbhava yogin still maintains the power of self-projection. In short by practising Śāmbhava yoga the seeker attains Perfection, Fullness and unstinted Freedom.

Yoga

In this connection, a short discussion of the Pātañjala system of yoga* in general and its difference from the Pratyabhijñā system of Freedom will not be out of place. The system of yoga as prescribed by Patañjali is eightfold. The preliminary moral training is included first under two heads, viz., yama and niyama. The yogic training proper starts from āsana (posture), and such yogic training may be divided into two stages. The first stage comprises āsana (postures), prāṇāyama (control of breath) and pratyāhara (withdrawal of senses from their corresponding objects), all the three aiming at restraining the mind from the physical side; and the second stage comprises dhāraṇā (conception), dhyāna (meditation) and samādhi (a state of trance). The latter three are different forms of concentration and aim directly at controlling the mind. Samādhi which directly leads to kaivalya is divided into two forms, lower and higher, known respectively as samprajñāta samādhi and asamprajñāta samādhi. The latter is the goal, the former, which is of various types, serving but as a stepping stone to it. The first is a state in which buddhi continues to function, though it is wholly absorbed in the contemplation of a particular object, everything else being excluded. In the asamprajñāta stage all sources of distraction are eradicated and buddhi shines forth with the sattva element in the ascendent, and in this stage even consciousness of the object disappears. According to the Pātañjala system of yoga, the innermost practice is concentration, through which the sense of the body melts away, but the supreme tattva is not revealed, as we have already stated. It should be noted here that

* For Summary of Pātanjala System of Yoga. I am indebted to M. Hiriyana. The said summary has been taken from his work, 'Outlines of Indian Philosophy'. George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London.

the stage of samprajñāta samādhi of the Pātañjala system of yoga is more or less similar to the dreamless state (tūrīya) of the Śaiva yoga of the Pratyabhijñā system. About samādhi, it is stated in the Saivāgama that Śiva alone in the grand deep trance-state (samādhi) pervades everything in the universe and He alone is and there is no second to Him and hence everything is absorbed in samādhi everywhere. Illusions (ajñāna) and undue attachments (moha) on the part of the individual selves being over, everything in this stage acts as an aid to such realization. Bodily postures (āsanas) are not considered as essential in the Śaiva yoga of the Pratyabhijñā system. Gift and charity are deemed in that system as self-knowledge the preceptor imparts to the disciple. Worship and religious practices are of no avail in such a state; there is contemplation and contemplation alone. Like the ceaseless flow of oil gushing forth out of oil seeds, there is a spontaneous flow of contemplation within the very core of the heart of the sādhaka. He then realizes his own essence in terms of unity as 'I' in its fullness, constitutive of the contemplator, the object to be contemplated upon and the contemplation itself.

The foregoing discussion reveals that the control of breath (prāṇāyama), withdrawal of senses from their objects (pratyāhara), concentration (dhāraṇā) and meditation (dhyāna)—recognised as means of self-realization in the aforesaid Pātañjala system of Astāṇga-yoga are not indispensable for the Pratyabhijñā system of realization as freedom. For such realization of freedom, this system prescribes the awakening of the sense of awareness of 'I' as full (Pūrṇoham) and perfect by liquidating the false sense of 'ego', both physical and psychical, commonly designated as 'I' in the empirical. In other words, realization in this system comprises the sense of Śivahood in everything. The prime object the seeker after truth (sādhaka) aspires after is to become Śiva which is the essence of the jīva. It should be noted here the Upaniṣadic concept of 'I am Brahman' (Aham Brahmāsmi) finds its fullest expression in this system in the realization of 'All is Brahman' (Sarvam khalvidam Brahma) through the consciousness of 'Thou art That' (Tvat tvamasi). It is the recognition of 'All that is', a sense of felt immediacy

in terms of the grand presence of Śiva, i.e., 'Śiva-sanniveśa', in terms of 'I am what I am' or, in other words, 'Thou art what Thou art'. It is pure subjectivity—consciousness, understood as autonomous and therefore separate from the physical and psychical, otherwise called empirical. The question may be raised in this connexion : is it on that account cosmic, covering or referring to or being in some intelligible relation to other bodies or minds, or is it to be considered as neutral, neither individual nor cosmic? The realization of cosmic subjectivity as the truest immanent essence is possible in the region of Freedom in terms of pure Bhakti cum Love which is Śiva and His cosmic embodied form.

Saktopaya

We have already stated that the Śāmbhava means is the supreme means of freedom meant for the highest order of seekers after truth (sādhaka). The next lower means is Śakti (Śāktopāya) which stands intermediate between the lowest means called 'Āṇava' on the one hand and the highest means called 'Śāmbhava' on the other. It is called Śākta means, for in this stage consciousness as power (cit śakti) is the guiding principle as against the Śāmbhava means in which Śiva as Prakāśa plays the guiding role. The Śākta means is also called mantra means, for in this stage Śakti or consciousness as power assumes the form of mantra or mystic syllable full of consciousness. The efficacy of the mantra is evoked there for the sake of self-realization and gaining freedom. The principle in which mantra is being realized is called *'citta'*—(citta =caityate anena param tattvam), the condensed form of the self as consciousness. Through the constant practice of the mantra, citta itself becomes full of mantra and the sādhaka then is raised to the stage of pure knowledge (śuddha vidyā). Further mantra is characterised as deliberation (manana) of the mystic syllable by practising which the aspirant gains the saving grace of the Lord Śiva. Hence mantra in a sense is the means which saves the aspirant from the turmoils of the world. The mystic syllable (vīja mantra), when intensely thought of or meditated upon properly, gets enlivened and the seeker feels the living presence of something

Divine in the form of Gods and Goddesses. That which is Holy, full of Supernormal powers and illuminating may be called Devatā, derived from the root 'Div' *i.e.,* Divine and hence mantra is constitutive of the Gods and Goddesses. It should be noted here that mere incantation or recitation of the mantra without understanding the import thereof does not fetch anything spiritual; on the contrary the efficacy of the mantra depends upon the conscious deliberation of the same by the seeker himself, i.e., the personal efforts of the sādhaka is indispensable in that sphere. The spiritual preceptor (guru) is the initiator or the transmitter of the mantra and the disciple is the receiver. Or in other words, the conscious power of the mantra acts as intermediary between the spiritual preceptor on the one hand and the disciple on the other. Now the question may be raised : what do we exactly mean by the efficacy of the mantra, or in other words, conscious awakening of the mantra? It is said that the body of the God in the form of the universe is constituted by the mantra, made up of alphabets (varnas). The alphabets as atomic centres of consciousness are located in different centres of the parts of the individual body as well as the universe. Such consciousness gets awakened through contemplation of 'citi śakti' as 'I' in Its fullness, the primordial vibration or manifestation of which is speech otherwise called vāk. Thus secrecy of the efficacy of the mantra lies in the unfoldment of consciousness expressed as speech or 'vāk', out of which mantra emanates. The original speech otherwise called 'Logos' or *Paravak* is the mother (mātṛkā) of the alphabets (varṇas). The spiritual preceptor initiates the aspirant and leads him to the path of realization step by step and mantra is the means which helps the aspirant in such realization. The sense of sensuousness of the aspirant (sādhaka) gets sublimated and raised to the higher state of consciousness by the purifying power of the mantra. This is a state of consciousness pure and simple.

It has already been stated that in the Śāktopāya, otherwise called Mantropāya, citta (the inner organ) is the principle through which mantra becomes living. In this stage the self assumes the form of citta (cittam ātmā) as against Self as consciousness (caitanyam ātmā) in the higher order of the aforesaid Śāmbhava

stage. Further in the Śāktopāya meditation makes room for the purification of thought and paves the way of self-realization and the aspirant realizes his own self as consciousness. The self is in essence eternally free, but because of the binding factors, i.e., pāśas due to māyā already stated, the individual self feels himself as bound and the result is that he is bound. For the removal of pāśas instructions from the spiritual preceptor, lessons from the scriptures and proper arguments for the eradication of doubt have been prescribed in the Shāstras and as a result belief in the self gets confirmed.

Anavopaya

Now let us say something about vital energy or prāṇa śakti and the way such energy works for realization and perfection of the individual self. The vital energy (prāṇaśakti) which plays a very vital role in the Tāntrika way of sādhanā in general, is intimately connected with 'Ánavopāya' *vis-a-vis* realization of self. Generally speaking, the vital energy (prāṇaśakti) expresses itself in five forms such as prāṇa, apāna, samāna, udāna. and vyāna. Realization in line with vital energy starts with the control and balancing of prāṇa and apāna vāyu and as a result the breath of the sādhaka gets simpler i.e., assumes the natural form (samāna), and with the influx of udāna vāyu the power embeded in the centre of the mulādhāra cakra of the individual self in the form of coiled serpent (kuṇdalini śakti) is awakened and aided by vyāna vāyu it takes upward motion and piercing through the ājñā cakra via Brahmarandhra (upper part of the brain) ends in reaching Sahasrāra, the state of pure consciousness as perfect bliss where Śiva in terms of prakāśa and śakti as consciousness live in complete unison. At the very initial stage of ānava means, the indistinct sense or feeling of the aspirant is awakened in line with prāṇa, the first flutter or vibration, caused out of the power of kuṇdalini. The vital energy or śakti as prāṇa owes its origin to the great void otherwise expressed in so many terms such as mahāśūnya, darkness, negation, nothingness and the like. In this state nothing can be postulated or characterised either as sat (existence) or as asat (non-existence); the state is even prior to any sort of revelation or illumination (prakāśa). Psychologically speaking, this state may be said to be what Sri

Aurobindo calls 'inconscient'. Further, by the influence of samāna vāyu, the aspirant identifies himself with the entire world of objects, i.e., in this state there is no sense of the subjective distinguishable from the objective or in other words from the point of view of categories this state may be said to be analogous to 'Īśvara Tattva'. The purification of vikalpas either in the subjective or in the objective then starts and for such purification, in the ānava stage, the efforts of the individual sādhaka are needed. It should be noted here that no such personal efforts are required in the aforesaid śāmbhava stage as the said vikalpas get purified and melted there in a natural way. Further in the eight-fold ways of yoga, prescribed in the Pātañjala system, each preceding lower stage succeeds the higher one, but finally the question of revelation in terms of recognition of the supreme does not arise as there is nothing objective to be revealed or recognised in that system. But in the Pratyabhijñā system, revelation in terms of recognition of the supreme is indispensable, for the supreme principle called pure 'I' or 'Pūrṇāhanta' is realized there as Freedom or in other words 'I' in Its fullness as we have already stated. Supernatural powers (bibhūti) gained through yoga are astounding at the time of awakening from samādhi (Vyutthāna) but these powers are detrimental to the acquisition of spiritual Freedom or mokṣa. In the aforesaid ānava stage, the possibility of fall from the spiritual height is greater than in the Śākta stage. In the ānava stage, the teachings of the preceptor are to be obeyed all the time. As regards meditation or contemplation, the Śaivāgama holds that the object to be meditated upon is the all-pervading self as pure 'I' to be recognised as freedom. We have already stated that freedom has no abode to live in. It never moves from place to place. It pervades everywhere. Further, we have already referred to the functionings of different forms of vital energy in connection with the control of breath and awakening of prāṇa-kuṇdalini which reaches *'Sahasrara'* as a consequence of which the binding forces limiting the self are removed. The aspirant then enjoys and lives in a state full of bliss—the state is like a state of vacuuity, having no pull or attraction whatsoever. In the next stage, the joys are no more ; it is, so to say, a state of joylessness. Further

where the objects of experience are completely melted, the stage is to be characterised as 'pūrṇānanda'. Beyond pūrṇānanda, there are stages such as Brahmānanda and Mahānanda and the like. In this way when the sixth stage of ānanda is transcended, there is nothing to realize and enjoy as there is no rising (udaya) and setting (nilaya) there. This is the state of Jagadānanda, the stage may be said to be ever-rising and ever-resting within itself (svarūpaviśrānti), where there is no distinction between self and not-self, self as if melting into not-self and not-self into self. This state is beyond Tūrīya, the fourth state of self-experiencing level. This is the state of great expansion (Mahāvyāpti) and exaltation reached through the processes of the aforesaid vital energy (prāṇaśakti). The entire universe then is not dissolved. It forms inalienable part of the self as body. The whole process in the said āṇava stage is the process of the awakening of the power of consciousness as embodied in accordance with the workings of the vital energy (prāṇaśakti).

How the vital energy (prāṇaśakti) acts and lends itself to realization of freedom may be stated in the following way : First the pure unstinted consciousness is transformed into vital energy (prāṇaśakti)—(Prāk saṁvit prāṇe pariṇīta). In the Brahma Sūtra, it is also stated—'Prāṇsthata anugamtu'. Some of the commentators of the Brahma Sūtra are supposed to have interpreted the said Sūtra in the sense that prāṇa in this context is not to be identified with any form of vital energy; it is evergreen and blissful and acts like nector. It should be noted here that the centre of consciousness (caītanya) and knowledge (jñāna) is the self as embodied and covered with prāṇa or vital energy, some portion of which is revealed as the power of sensibilities while, some other portion is manifested as objects of sensation. Hence everything in the universe is the expression of prāṇaśakti, manifesting itself in different forms. It should further be noted that cognitive power (jñāna-śakti) and vital energy (prāṇaśakti) go together as indivisibly constitutive of the self. Like knowledge as power (jñāna-śakti) the vital energy (prāṇaśakti) is not many but one and the same everywhere. Moreover, the same vital energy embodying the self functions as initiator of all possible acts, be it cognitive or otherwise. First through the cyclic move-

ments of the said prāṇaśakti, ego-sense in the body becomes firm and prepares the ground for the awakening of Kuṇḍalinī. Udāna vāyū initiates the processes of Kuṇḍalinī to awaken and rise upwards aided by vyāna vāyū which sends consciousness to cidākāśa beyond Brahma-randhra.

Further we have already mentioned that consciousness as power can be awakened through the medium of speech (vāk), in the form of the mantra. In this context a brief note on the garland of letters (varṇa mālā) and japa (inner articulation and repetition of the mantra in a prescribed order) will not be out of place.

From 'A' to 'Ha'—all the alphabets (varṇas) of the garland of letters and their corresponding partials (kalās) are inextricably associated with the individual self. But due to the influence of nescience, covering the pristine glory of the self, these alphabets are reduced to different microscopic centres of consciousness. Body-sense generates due to covers caused by the māyā śakti and as a result the eternally infinite self assumes the form of individuality and becomes atomic. Thoughts are expressed through the vehicles of speech composed of sentences (vākya) which are composed of words, and words are again combinations of letters, the ultimate ingredients of speech. Generally speaking, speech or sound is divided into four classes such as, parā, paśyanti, madhyamā and vaīkhari. Vaīkhari-vāk being an articulate sound denotes objects in general and it is defined as—"Vaīkhari viśvavigraha'. The next higher state is madhyamā vāk, which is called mantra-vāk—working as intermediary between paśyanti and vaīkhari. Paśyanti vāk is Divine vision—'Paśyanti divyacakṣuṣa', and the supreme speech is Parāvāk which is identical with nāda, co-extensive with Śiva tattva. The said vital energy (prāṇaśakti) and consciousness as power (citi śakti) are intimately associated with the said speech. The bright colour of the alphabets as atomic centres of consciousness is reflected in the madhyamā stage which is otherwise called mantra-vāk where individual efforts of the disciple are needed for the awakening of the mantra initiated by the spiritual preceptor to his disciple (already stated). In this stage, the vision of the aspirant becomes inwardised having outward senses with-

drawn from the world of physical objects. On the upper side of the madhyamā there is paśyanti and on the lower side, there is vaikhari as we have already stated. Madhyamā vāk is both manifested (vyakta) and un-manifested (avyakta). It is mantra-vāk. Mantra is the light of consciousness (mantra cinmaricaya). In the Pūrvamīmāṁsa mantra is defined as that which saves (mananāta trāyate) or lets the mind free from its mindedness and as a result one receives redemption from the maladies of the world. Paśyanti vāk on the other hand is Divine through which the sages and gods visualise things (Tad vishnu paramam padam sadā paśyanti suraya). Beyond Paśyanti, there is Parāvāk, the primordial state of potentiality of all possible divine emanations and worldly manifestations of things and beings in general inclusive of the individual selves together with alphabets as atomic centres of consciousness. In the Philosophy of Grammar the supreme speech is Paśyanti, the Goddess of Speech (Vāgdevī). It is fully unmanifest and full of spirit. While pervading the entire universe It extends from the mūlādhāra cakra upto Sahasrāra of the individual self, for in the Tantras microcosm is conceived as the condensed form of macrocosm. Beyond that, there is Parā, the supreme state, the state which is beyond all categories, and realizable through the awakening of the aforesaid serpent power (kuṇḍalinī śakti), as unity appearing in diversities.

About japa, this system holds that the principle of Logos (Śabda Brahman), being realized, the Para Brahman is known. The creation of the world from speech (vāk) is acceptable to the āgama. It may be stated in the following way: What do we exactly mean by the perceptible world of objects, such as ghaṭa, paṭa and maṭha? Each of these particular objects belongs to a class (jāti) which is understandable in terms of the particular belonging to that class. But all classes have each of their individual existence and each such existence again belongs to a class and in this way the idea of the supreme existence (parā jāti-sattā) is reached. Hence a particular ghaṭa means ghaṭatvāvacchinna sattā, paṭa means paṭatvāvacchinna sattā and the like. As a result the denotative character of speech eventually signifies sattā or existence, being constitutive of it. While discussing

japa, the above discussion may sound redundant, but we have introduced the discussion to show the view-point of the Grammarians to whom a section of the Tantras bear affinity, so far as word and its denotative power is concerned.

Now let us resume our discussion about japa. Japa is twofold —inner (āntara) and outer (vāhya). The science of japa as a spiritual practice (adhyātmasādhanā) is admitted in almost every system of religious creed—such as Vaīdika, Tāntrika, Baudha, Jaīna and Catholic. In the Philosophy of Grammar japa is called 'Vāg-yoga', i.e., union with the Logos or Śabda Brahman through the utterance of the mantra. The senses being controlled and mind being inwardised, the inner japa (āntara japa) is practised in the core of the heart. This is japa proper. Through repeated practices of mantra (mystic syllable), the inner japa otherwise called nāda becomes manifest in the blissful form of Bhāgavati, lying placed in the very core of the heart of the lotus. No vibration reaches there, and that is why the heart-centre is called *anahata*. At the initial stage of the practice of japa, the sāttvika abhimāna, in the form of 'I am' remains. When the senses including manas are controlled in the Madhyamā stage, the vibrations emanating from the utterance of the mantras through japa are resounded in the heart-centre and as a result the entire visible universe disappears from outward sight. There is humming sound all around. In the Māṇḍukya Upaniṣhad Brahman is symbolised as *AUM* (OM) having four steps or pādas. The place of suṣupti lies at a fixed point between the eye-brows. In this state the mystic syllable, constitutive of half-moon (ardha-candra), rodhini and nāda, is to be contemplated upon. Above nāda, there is the end of nāda i.e., nādānta. Śakti placed on the upper point of the nādānta (i.e. in between Parānāda and Mahānāda) is called vyāpinī śakti. It stretches over the regions of samanā and unmanā and draws the sādhaka towards the state beyond tūriya. The unmanā stage is the stage of transcendence and there is no other stage beyond that, though in the unmanā stage there are several gradations. All this is a matter of personal realization and experience and may be characterised as ineffable. Now what is the state signified by the aūpaniṣadika sayings 'Sa

aīkṣata'; 'Vahuṣyām prajāyeya'? Prior to creation the first vibration of Para Brahman is called vimarśa and this is the first manifestation of consciousness as power, which later on performs the functions of creation, preservation, destruction, obscuration and grace. At the background all these processes Śiva necessarily stands as the symbol of revelation. In the Tantras, in general, Śiva in terms of revelation and Śakti as conciousness are essentially the same and identical and from the transcendental point of view nāda is the meeting point of such a union and this is beyond all categories.

The initial stage of Para Brahman in descending order is nāda-śakti and bindu-śakti in terms of aham and idam respectively. In the Isvara Tattva already discussed, aham (subject) and idam (object) stand equated with the predominance of the objective. In this stage śakti gradually becomes dense, hidden and implicit and śakti in such a dense state is called Bindu, which is otherwise called Śabda-Brahman, from which words and their corresponding objects originate. Mantra is derived or emanated from nāda; nāda, bindu and vīja together form kāmakalā. The powers (śaktis) embodying or embodied in words while referring to their corresponding objects assume the different forms of mātṛikās reducible to alphabets. Nāda and Bindu remain inextricably infused in mystic syllable otherwise called the original seed of the mantra (vīja mantra) pronounced in the form of ṁ (ँ). For instance the symbolic form of māyā vīja is pronounced as Hṛīṁ. In course of time mantra-vidyā has gone to much abuse no doubt, but the importance of the efficacy of the mantra cannot be overestimated. What is stated above in connection with the Śākta and Ánava means of Liberation is nothing but uccāra (unfoldment) in lieu of praṇava, meditation in the sphere of intellection, and instruments of meditatian in case of bodily organs. There is no bar in gaining spiritual freedom through the awakening of Prāṇa-Kuṇḍalinī as we have already stated. In fine the aforesaid means to gain the Absolute Freedom or Śivatva are to be considered as both in ascending and descending orders of evolution of consciousness, not by by-passing or rejecting the many and its source, caused by nescience, but by transforming the material-

vital into the Spiritual and accommodating everything in Its realm.

The Theory of Grace or Descent of Power (Sakti-nipat)

Let us now give below a very short note on Divine Grace otherwise called 'Descent of Power'. We have already referred to descent of power upon the seeker after truth without resorting to any of the aforesaid means whatsoever. The descent of power is just like the sudden death of a man through lightening without assigning any reason thereof. Similarly the aspirants all on a sudden receive grace from the Benign Śiva, the question of why and what for does not arise in that context. The bestowal of Grace belongs to the world of contingency, the world of Śiva's own freedom. There is no necessary cause-effect relationship between the intensity of the quest of the seeker on the one hand and the descent of power on the other (already stated). Even prārabaddha does not stand in the way of such a descent. It should be noted here that the theory of the descent of power is acceptable to the Tantras (both Śaiva and Śākta) in a general way, it has direct bearing on the theory of Liberation or Freedom, both individual and cosmic. It should further be noted that there are degrees of Divine grace and different classes of seekers receive the said grace in different ways. (Already discussed). The more intense the descent of power the quicker is Freedom. The less intense descent of power awakens the self and gives rise to knowledge due to *pratibha,* and for such awareness no external aids are necessary. The still less intense descent of power makes a man self-possessed and good; in such a man there arises unflinching faith in God, great regard for the efficacy of the mantra and competence for gaining mastery over the Tattvas. All this shows that the descent of power which has degress (already stated) plays an important role in the domain of Freedom and individuals having various dispositions receive such grace without any prescribed means whatsoever.

Bhakti

While closing this section we shall make a passing reference to the importance of the concept of Bhakti in the Pratyabhijñā system of thought. This system claims to be a doctrine of non-differenced unity (Advaita-vāda). The question may be raised

here how Bhakti or devotion fits in in such a system of Advaita. It is generally said that in the Advaita as propounded by Ácāryya Śaṁkara there is no scope for Bhakti to fit in. But Śaṁkara is said to have stated—'Satyapi bhedāpagame nātha tavāhaṁ na māmaki na sthvam samudro hi taraṁa kvachan samudro na taraṁa.' In spite of bhedas (differences) being removed, O Lord the sense of 'I am you' remains, but not 'Thou art I' as the waves originate from the sea and not vice versa. This shows that though differences stand eliminated, the subtle distinction remains. We ave already stated it while discussing the judgment 'Soham' i.e., 'I am He'. In the Śaṁkara Vedānta devotion invariably precedes Jñāna, but in the Pratyabhijñā system knowledge and devotion go hand in hand and they are inextricably interfused with each other and form a unity, and out of this unity the attitude of self-less service spontaneously ushers in. The Metaphysicians speak of Liberation in different terms but Pratyabhijñā system lays much stress on the aspect of pure devotion and holds that where there is devotion there is Liberation or Freedom (mokṣa). Further, in the Pratyabhijñā system whenever and wherever devotion is referred to, there is reference of the flow of bliss (ānanda). Vidyāraṇya Muni has also described the flow of ceaseless bliss in the heart of the liberated soul while living. As a matter of fact, in a state where there is no sense of distinction the waves of bliss generate. There are different theories of Liberation, current in different systems of thought, but it is stated in the Pratyabhijñā system that Liberation or Mokṣa is the culminating state of devotion.

In the philosophy of Trika, devotion in the attitude of service lies embeded in every stage of sādhana. The Bhakta Sādhaka remains ever anxious to receive the Grace of the Lord. 'Dāsya' in this system is said to be 'Dāśasya bhāva', that is, the attitude of a servant. Dāśa is said to be as 'Dīyate asmai Svāmine sarvam yathābhilasitam'. (As desired by the Lord, the devotee must be prepared to sacrifice everything he possesses). In this state, the sense of egotism goes away for ever. The triplication of jñāna, jñeya and jñātā has no place; only the revelation of the supreme tattva ever shines there. In some of the hymns of Utpalācārya it is stated that 'may such a devotee be blessed'

—from whose heart the convulsion or agitation due to series of vikalpas has died down and as a consequence the fretful fever of the world is over and who remains ever identical with the Lord. This state may be characterised as a state full of Bliss as such—such a Bliss, the aspirant enjoys all the time in every grade of experience such as wakeful, dream, dreamless sleep, in the deep trance state (samādhi) and reawakening back from samādhi (vyuttham)—the entire atmosphere is then surcharged with bliss and the sādhaka realizes Śiva in everything as the perfect embodiment of Bliss.

CHAPTER V

TANTRAS AND THE MODERN AGE

While closing the discussion of 'Tantras—a General Study' let us try to make a passing reference to the possibility of any role the principles of the Tantras could play in the present set-up of man and matters. The present age may in all fitness be characterised as an age of *transition* and *crisis*—transition in the sense of what may be called generation-gap, i.e., the inability of the men of the early thirties to understand minds of the youth of the seventies and realize their problems. Similarly the youth of the present age views with suspicion the 'so-called' values of the past, especially of the 19th century, such as truth, justice, righteousness, the means justifying the end, the integrity of character and so on. We are thus in a strange predicament. Common man is getting bewildered and hesitant in every sphere of life, be it material or spiritual. The youth, the backbone of the society, having been frustrated on all fronts and being hard pressed by the hazards of life and living, are in a state of utter despair and confusion. The entire situation seems to be problem-stricken and gloomy. We are, as if, at the cross-roads of history and know not what is stored for humanity in the future.

From another point of view the present age may be designated as *dynamic* in the sense that it demands quick movement and immediate action. From the theoretic point of view, the age of speculation based on logical imagination is gone, the age of system-making is over; instead analysis, probing into the very depth of the objective has come to the forefront. The marvellous achievements of new physics and mathematics during the last twentyfive years and the use of symbols and notations in the field of logical thinking have brought such a change in the periphery of intellectual field today that we are haunted by the idea of so-called objectivity and lured by the glamour of reckoning machine. We live, as if, in an age of computation and automation. Mathematical exactitude and perfection based on statistics have become the cry of the day. Thus the present civilization may be called machine-oriented civilization guided

by the principles of *probability* and *reduction*. We are making ambitious plans to transcend the boundary of space limitation. We are no longer full-fledged human beings with human values and aspirations. Guided by the principle of so-called objectivity within the natural, we have been reduced to some form of machine (electro-protonic cells in violent motion) controlled by *reason* in terms of intellect.

All this shows that a clear-cut clevage between the past and the present is a fact. Hence a crisis both in the physical and the mental is looming large ; the crisis is evident in the surface from different points of view such as economic, political and social. The crisis is all the more discernible in the total bankruptcy of our moral conduct and spiritual quest. In India the traditional values of what is called genuinely Indian have scanty or no appeal to the present-day Indian mind. As a result the aforesaid clevage between the past and the present is almost complete. We sometimes feel as if we are living in an alien universe. At the thought level, there has been a complete bifurcation between spirit and matter and in such bifurcation matter has not only been dissociated from spirit but also matter, being distinguished as superseding spirit, is proclaiming its triumph from the house top. The net result is a state of dislocation and bewilderment in the mental. Today we are no longer drawn by the influence of the civilization of the past.

Now the question is, how to fit in the values (justice, righteousness, etc.) of the past with the objective models of present-day science or, in other words, how to make an adjustment between the value-centric microcosm with the fact-centric macrocosm and what is to negotiate and how to solve the presentday impasse? The said problem may be analysed in the following way : let an individual be taken as the victim of the situation as given, how such an individual should behave with nature, on the one hand, and his fellow-beings including his own self, on the other. As regards relation with nature, the problem is not so knotty as it appears to be. To a major extent we are all within the natural in the sense that the ingredients which are constitutive of nature are also constitutive of the bodily organisms of human beings. Secondly, man can go beyond the

natural ; that is, the spirit of transcendence is found only in man. Such spirit together with appropriate practices helps man rise above the natural and makes him truly spiritual. Like the empirical, the spiritual is also something substantive in the sense that the spiritual adepts can move and have their being within the spirit. Further, it is only in the spiritual that man can really communicate with his fellow beings and participate in their joys and sufferings.

Let us now state in brief the essential character of civilization and how far we can live a civilized life in the present set-up. What should be the essential character of civilization? The obvious answer is : this is ultimately ethico-spiritual, 'ethico' in terms of some basic social codes and values to be accepted and followed as imperatives, and spiritual in the sense of consciousness, in terms of power, which is at the same time conscious of itself and finally leads to realisation of the self as Freedom. But what do we witness to-day? We witness cries all around for material and technical attainments and as a result we are getting more and more sophisticated and mechanical. There is no denying the fact that there has been a good deal of advancement in the fields of science and technology, but in that context we forget that the magnificent extension of 'material knowledge and power' does not itself form the essence of civilization but this depends on the mental disposition of the individuals and nations living in this world. All other things relevant to such advancement, such as aesthetic and historical, are only accompanying circumstances which have got nothing to do with the essence of civilization. 'Creative, artistic, intellectual and material attainments can show their true and full effects when the continued existence and development of civilization have been secured by founding civilization itself on mental disposition', which should be truly ethico-spiritual. It is only in this struggle to become ethical that man comes to possess real value as a personality, it is only under the influence of ethical convictions that the various relations of human society are formed in such a way that both the individual and the nation can develop in an ideal manner. If the ethico-spiritual content is lacking, civilization collapses, though in other directions

there may be creative and intellectual forces of the strongest nature at work.

The distinctive mark of the later part of the present century, particularly since the forties onwards, is the spirit of *alienation* which has been gaining ground, and we, whether as nations or as individuals, are getting more and more segregated from one another. A strong world-view based on mutual trust and understanding is fast receding. What is happening today amongst the nations of the world in the name of conciliation and friendship is the racing of power-politics and accumulation of power and more power. Secondly, exclusive mechanization and special stress on the principle of the aforesaid objectivity are making us forgetful of human values and, as a result, we are becoming facticists, iconoclasts and secularists. Values of any kind such as ethical consciousness, religious aspiration and spiritual quest do not stir our emotive mind. Intellectually, we are more concerned with the problem of the *statement* of value, the problem whether value is subjective or objective and similar other problems but side by side we do not feel the urge for evaluating our personal lives and living. We do not pause to consider value as a demand felt from within and as a sense of duty for the good of the society. We are more obsessed with what we have materially achieved or are achieving, without raising the question of what we essentially are. We do not feel the spirit of dedication and self-sacrifice.

Further, the tragedy of the present-day civilization is that we are bound within the world of what we think or act but never raise the question of what we become. The question of the becoming of what we essentially are immediately brings in a sense of moral values and spiritual demands in us, cultivation of which helps broaden our minds, expanding our imagination and extending the dimension of our thinking. As logic in the empirical helps appraising facts and correspondence of facts, similarly psychology in the spirit can give us clue for analysis of the self in terms of consciousness and suggest the paths of transcendence from physical bindings or limitations. As we are trying to be more and more scientific and, therefore, 'objective', we enter into the world of probability and *subsistence* and the spirit of

non-commitment and scepticism occupies our mental horizon. We are becoming neat intellectuals at the expense of the spiritual. Commitments of any kind in any field do not bind us. We are suffering from limitations and imperfections of hundred and one odds and hence dissatisfaction is haunting us.

The success of civilization depends on awakening the spiritual consciousness in us to reorient and modify our moral conduct and behaviour, to make efforts to be what we as human beings essentially are, to make man truly human. Material progress is to be fostered from the point of view of the *abhyudaya* (full-fledged development) of a nation but not at the cost of the spiritual, the *nihsreyas* (renunciation), for evolution, and hence progress, depends on the unfoldment of both these elements. Let everything be humanized first, let the problem of man be the central issue of all our endeavours. That which becomes potential in creating a sense of security in us, enhances goodwill in our behaviour and helps us in removing fear from within us should be considered as spiritual, and when such environs are created we may call ourselves progressive and civilized.

'Civilization, put quite simply, consists in giving ourselves, as human beings, to the effort to attain the perfecting of human race and actualization of progress of every sort in the circumstances of the humanity and of the objective world. The mental altitude, however, involves a double predisposition, firstly we must be prepared to act affirmatively towards the world and life. Secondly we must become ethical with a view to the spiritual in terms of the 'self.' *

The above statement gives us an idea of the state of affairs that are going on in the present-day world. Now the question is, how to get rid of the present day malady, how to solve the transitional crisis, what should be the model of civilization, and

* 'Self' here does not mean mind which happens to be one of the evolutes coming out of *Prakrti* and, counted from bottom, is the twenty-first of the twenty-four *Prakrti tattvas* of the Samkhya system of thought and, as one of the senses, is the eleventh sense-organ. Neither does it mean the 'synthetic unity of apperception' in the Kantian sense. By 'self' is meant here something substantial and *causa sui,* the essential nature of which is realizable in consciousness.

what contribution could the philosophy of the Tantras make to solve the present-day impasse?

The Role of the Tantras

The term 'tantra'* is sometimes derived from the root *tan*, i.e., to spread or to expand what is latent in the individual human being as microcosm, as an atomic centre of embodied consciousness. It also means a discipline, a method and a system—a system of acts in the physical, vital and the mental planes by which a centre of being can render itself an apparatus efficient for the purpose of encompassing the twofold end of *abhyudaya* (uplift or full-fledged progress) and *nihsreyas* (renunciation in the sense of supreme realization as Freedom). Further, it expands what is latent in the heart of nature (*Prakrti*) and paves the way for universal consciousness to grow as an objective. Such universal consciousness finds its fullest satisfaction in the individual as self in the sense of consciousness, conscious of itself or, in other words, Freedom.

According to the Tantras the world in which we live and have our being is real in the sense that the existence of such a world does not in any way depend on us. It always appears before us as something given. In a sense this is the grand *Indefinite* made explicit and meaningful through the process of consciousness, as experiencing out. This is the pure matter with which Śiva in a sense is conceived as embodied.

Individual self forms one of the principal issues of the Tāntrika discipline. The history of man and his latent power and expansion, his ideals and values from different aspects, finds fullest expression in the said discipline. It lays special stress on the principles of purification (*sodhana* and *suddhi*), sublimation, uplifting or elevation (*uddhara*) and finally re-affirmation of the identity Thou-That in pure consciousness. In spiritual

* The philosopher Herman Keyserling, in his celebrated work *Das Reise Tage buch Einer Philosophen* (The Travel Diary of a Philosopher), writes (pp. 223-24) of the Tantras, "however extravagant some of its sayings may sound, their meaning is clear and their fundamental ideas are in accordance with reason. Tantras are not mere ritualism, nor the strength of the fundamental of the Tantras does depend on its observance of the rituals".

realization, the Advaita follows the path of negation (*neti neti*), whereas Tantra, being primarily of practical and realistic nature, practises the principles of affirmation and acceptance and hence accommodation.

The present era may be characterised as an era of Śiva, the essence of which is Śakti or consciousness as power in different forms. Such consciousness as power is felt everywhere in the world, either explicitly or in an implicit way. It works differently in different contexts and situations. In some of the countries in the West, under the surface of tremendous success in material forces and marvellous achievements in science and technology, there is perceived a seething upsurge of consciousness which is agitating the minds of the people there, the net result of which is that they are seriously thinking about the meaningfulness of life and living. Is life meaningful, how to make life meaningful, is life worth-living?—these are the newly arisen pertinent questions of the day. They are realizing the futility of taking 'the world too much with us' and the uselessness of laying too much stress on the material. "Only when we are able to attribute a real meaning to the world and to life shall we be able to give ourselves to such actions as will produce results of real value. As long as we look on our existence in the world as meaningless there is no point whatever in desiring to effect anything in the world". They are trying to find out the link between matter and spirit or, in other words, between the material and the spiritual. Matter is essential in so far as it affords to give us amenities and comforts of life and living, in so far as it helps quick communication and makes exchange of thoughts and mutual understanding amongst nations possible. In the Tantras matter is considered as *Prakrti* (the physical background of the material world), belonging to the fold of *Maya,* which provides human beings, with the psycho-physical organism of the body, determined by the principle of destiny or *adrsta,* the stock of *karmika* dispositions due to deeds done in the past. The moral world belongs to the world of *Karma* (deeds). In this section the term *social* is used in the context of the moral. Beyond material and social, there is spiritual, the world of pure consciousness, practising which one can transcend the bounds of

the natural, which includes both the material and the moral.

In the Tantras, in the concept of Śiva is found the potential link between the natural and the trans-natural or spiritual, the social values within the natural and the spirit of transcendence within the trans-natural. Of the four values such as *dharma, artha, kama* and *moksa* recognised in the Indian systems of philosophic thought, the first three belong within the natural and the last one to the spiritual. The Tantras uphold the twofold evolution, as we have already mentioned *'abhyudaya'* (material unfoldment) and *nihsreyas* (spirit of renunciation), which together constitute the spiritual-cultural history of India.

Further, Śiva embodies in Itself the Principles of the Highest Good (social), on the one hand, and Freedom as the Absolute (spiritual), on the other. The social is based on some fundamental laws (*dharma*), both universal (common) and individual, in which objects and enjoyment of objects are properly balanced. The term *'dharma'* is derived from the root *'dhr'* which means 'to preserve and to sustain'. According to the Tantras the world is an order; in other words, it is cosmos. Hence the world order is *'dharma'* ; *dharma* in this context is that by which the universe is upheld (*dharyate*). There is no scope for *adharma* or disorder in the very nature of the universe. 'That righteousness or *dharma* prevails' is not a thought-product, this is in the very essence of things (*Dharanat dharma*). 'Those that constitute the very nature of things, they are what they are' (*svalaksanam-dharanat*). The West* has tried to go into the heart of the natural laws but without probing the laws of the self (*atma-dharma*) in terms of consciousness.

We have already referred to and discussed the essential characteristics of civilization. We shall touch here in brief the

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* If the West decays today, it may be then that the seat of civilization will pass to the East, the great primitive source of generation of Man.

The Western civilization with its stupendous achievements in the fields of positive sciences and technology and accumulation of material resources may become more perfect and humane by observing the oriental life more closely and establishing contact with the conscience of modern Asia ; and the two extreme points of time, past and present, will meet—as a result, a fecund relation will be established, and our desire for spiritual unity will find its full satisfaction.

nature of civilization as conceived in India. True civilization consists in upholding the above-said *dharma* for the individual and general good, and the fostering of spiritual progress, so that, with justice to all beings, true happiness which is the immediate and ultimate end of all humanity and indeed of all beings may be attained.

In India the social is conceived as the base from which consciousness as power dawns. Such consciousness as power lies embedded in human beings, it works within the boundary of the natural with the possibility of transcendence to the realm of the spirit, and hence when such consciousness is awakened and properly directed social life becomes perfectly harmonised with a spiritual prius.

The present-day world situation demands the awakening of the aforesaid consciousness as power (Kuṇḍalinī Śakti, lying in human body) in all of us, in our vital, psychical and spiritual life and behaviour. How such consciousness as power (Śakti) is to be converted into mutual goodwill and understanding and further towards goodness or good of the society, fostering a sense of well-being in us, nay in humanity, and finally how such sense of goodwill is to be directed towards the awareness of Self as Freedom—in other words, the embodied form of Śiva—, these are the questions which are vitally affecting us to-day.

Further in the concept of Śiva is also found the essence of the matter as consciousness *(Visaya-caitanya)* and self as consciousness *(Atma-caitanya)*, i.e., both microcosm (the miniature of macrocosm) and macrocosm find their fullest expression in such a concept, otherwise called *'I in fullness' (Purna-ahanta)*, or Śiva.

The aforesaid demand presupposes analysis of the psychophysical organism, called human body, and the nature and function of consciousness as power otherwise called Kuṇḍalinī Śakti, as already mentioned.

According to the Tantras the human body is divided into Six Centres (Sat Cakras), such as Mūlādhāra, Svādhisthāna, Maṇipura, Anāhata, Viśuddha and Ájñā. Beyond them lies Sahasrāra, the thousand petalled lotus. A short note on the Six Centres and the Sahasrāra is given below.

Six Cakras and Sahasrara

Muladhara (Sacral Plexus) is situated or located in the region of anus in the human body, the place where the anus and the urethra canal meet. This is the resting place of the power of Kuṇḍalinī before it ascends. Four kinds of energy or vital power *(Prana-Sakti)* work in this plane. Four yoga-nerves *(nadis)* also meet in this region. *Brahmā* is the presiding deity of this centre; and of the four tattvas(categories) this is the Pṛthvi Tattva. Of the fifty letters (*varnas*) constitutive of the alphabets (Garland of Letters=*Varnamala*) four letters, together with four subtle sounds, are found in this plane.

Svadhisthana (Prostatic Plexus) is the second centre in the ascending order of the Kuṇḍalinī Śakti. It is located in the region of the testes, i.e. the place where the root of the penis and the testes meet. This is the centre of the *ap* (water) tattva (category). There are six kinds of vital energy or *Prana-Saktis* working at this centre. Six yoga-nāḍīs and six letters of the alphabet, together with six subtle sounds, are found in this plane. *Varuna* is the presiding deity of this centre.

Manipura (Solar Plexus) is the third *cakra* in order of ascent. It is located in the naval centre. Ten subtle energies or *Prana-Saktis* are functioning in this centre. Ten yoga-nāḍīs and ten letters of the alphabet, together with ten subtle sounds, are found in this plane. *Agni* is the presiding deity of this centre.

Anahata Cakra (Cardiac Plexus) is the fourth centre located in the region of the heart. Twelve subtle energies (*Prana-Saktis*) work in this centre. Twelve *yoga-nadis* and twelve letters of the alphabet, together with twelve subtle sounds, are found in this plane. *Isa* is the presiding deity of this centre.

Visuddha Cakra (Pharyngeal Plexus) is the fifth centre located in the region or at the base or root of the throat. There are sixteen subtle energies or *Prana-Saktis* working in this centre. The number of yoga-*nadis* that meet here is sixteen. Here there are sixteen letters of the alphabet, and sixteen subtle sounds are heard by the yogins in this plane. The presiding deity of this plane is *Sadasiva*.

Ajna Cakra : This is the final or the sixth centre, the seat of the mind, located in the centre of the eyebrows. At this centre

two kinds of subtle energy or *Prana Sakti* work. Two yoga-nāḍīs and two letters of the alphabet meet in this plane. Two subtle sounds are heard in this centre. *Sambhu* is the presiding deity of this plane.

Sahasrara : By piercing the aforesaid six centres (Sat Cakras), the spiritual adept arrives at the region of *Sahasrara* (the lotus of the thousand petals). The number of petals of the lotus is symbolic of its magnitude. *Sahasrara* is not called a *Cakra* proper and this plane is located at the top of the skull or the upper part of the brain (cerebrum). In this region all the sounds of the alphabet and all the subtle energies of the aforesaid six centres live in their causal states with manifold forms. This is the plane—in other words, centre — where the static and the kenetic aspects of consciousness, i.e., Kuṇḍalinī Śakti unite ; in other words, in this plane or centre Prāṇa-Kuṇḍalinī unites with Parā Kuṇḍalinī which is ever one with the Supreme Spirit. With the merging of the Kuṇḍalinī Śakti in the *Sahasrara,* all the different śaktis or energies of the different centres along with the mind, intellect, ego and mind-stuff *(citta)* of the spiritual adept dissolve completely in the Supreme (Parā) Śakti. As a result, the spiritual adept attains the state of *nirvikalpaka samadhi* (Indeterminate State). This is the state in which quiescent consciousness is realised. The Power which is initially aroused in the *Muladhara* is in itself consciousness and when it reaches the *Sahasrara* it assumes the nature of Supreme Consciousness. In the nirvikalpaka state all the vikalpas (determinants), such as the ideas of subject, object, knowledge, lose each of its individual identity. With this brief introduction of the six bodily centres and *Sahasrara* let us conclude our discussion by giving a short analysis of Kuṇḍalinī Śakti and its function.

Kundalini Sakti

Man is considered in the Tantras as a microcosm (kṣudra brahmāṇḍa), as we have already mentioned. Whatever exists in the outer universe exists in him. All the *tattvas* (categories) and *bhuvanas* (worlds) are within him. It is the abode of the Supreme where Śiva and Śakti stay in unison.

Energy polarises itself into two forms, namely, static or

potential and working or dynamic. Behind all activity there is a static background. This static centre in the human body is the seat of the Serpent Power* in the *Muladhara*, as we have already discussed. This centre of power is a gross form of *cit* or consciousness. In itself it is consciousness but by appearance it is a power which, as the highest form of force (Śakti), is a manifestation of the aforesaid consciousness as power. Just as there is a distinction between the Supreme Consciousness and Its active Power, so when consciousness manifests as energy it possesses the twin aspects of potential and kinetic nature. There is no partition in fact of reality. To the perfected eye of the realized self, the process of becoming is some form of imposition illusorily made on the mind; to the eye of the spiritual adept, becoming is 'tending to appear' and appearance is real. It would be noted here that in the Tantras there is no distinction between 'becoming' and 'being' or, in order words, between process and reality.

With this short background let us state the function of the *Kundalini Sakti*.

Function of Kundalini

"In the complex apparatus of 'the gross, subtle and causal forces' which is the body or the vehicle of Jīva, the static or potential pole of creating, sustaining and resolving Śakti is represented by the 'Kuṇḍalinī' or the coiled serpent power". It is the (gross, subtle and causal) body's supporting base and magazine of power. It is the central pivot on which the whole complex apparatus of the physical body, vital energy and mental activity moves and turns. "The Jīva apparatus is a closed machine of a specific and determinate character, with its bodily, vital and mental powers and functions limited and defined, because of the specific ratio in which *Kundalini* or static power in the apparatus stands with respect to the kinetic power actually working in and as that given apparatus". To change the working

* Kundalini Sakti is a power or Sakti that is coiled (Kundala) like a serpent and is awakened and goes up through the *cakras* to the *Sahasrara*.

efficiency of that apparatus is to change the ratio. "A transformation, dynamization and sublimation of the physical, vital and mental apparatus is possible only by what is called 'rousing of the *Kundalini* and its re-orientation from 'downward facing' to 'upward rising'. By the former the apparatus becomes a *'closed curve'* limited in character, restricted in functions and possibilities". It is a little doer and enjoyer. By the latter it breaks the restrictions (pāśa) and transcends its littleness.

The actual *modus operandi* of the rousing process and of the 'piercing' *(bheda)* of the *cakras* or spheres or planes as we may call them, is a very vital mode of Tāntrika, nay, of every form of sādhanā (spiritual practice). The essential thing is to make an ascent from spheres or planes that are more veiled, closed or limited to other planes that are more and more 'conscious' *(cinmaya)*, open and unrestricted, i.e., from relatively impure to relatively pure categories.

Three knots which bind the individual soul to the *prakrta* (natural) order have to be cut in making a successful ascent. They are the ties of the three *gunas*, the constitutive elements of Prakṛti, such as what presents *(sattva)*, what moves *(rajas)* and what veils *(tamas)*, famous in the Indian philosophical thought. Perfect experience is unconditioned, it is beyond the said three *gunas*. During the upward journey, the Jīva is not quite released from the natural frame till it reaches the sixth plane. 'Till then, it continues to possess, in a more and more refined, extended and dynamised form, the character of a centre in a certain type of sphere of the universe. It has not yet reached *brahma-randhra* or the 'opening' of pure and perfect experience.' In other words, the centre has not yet become the *bindu* or point, which is mystically called the perfect universe. 'Point' is that at which the perfect experience is opened to the centre. It should be noted here that a centre or Jīva, after transcending the natural, becomes transformed into a new being *(purnabhisikta)*, which then presents a double phase— 'a point phase and a continuous phase'. A psychological sublimation goes on with it side by side. 'The sixth plane (Ájñā Cakra) represents coalesced duality of *Prakasa* (illumination) and *Vimarsa* (thought) which evolves into the relation of subject-object'.

The end to be achieved is the realization of both pure and perfect *'Consciousness-Being-Bliss'.* "In the highest plane the pure cit, of the Advaita Vedānta, is realized as 'resplendent void', nay, 'Śiva-Śakti in close embrace' in the abode of the aforesaid thousand-petalled lotus. This is the abode of wholeness and perfection" It should be noted here that while going through the process of piercing the six centres the spiritual adept has to face a critical situation at every step of ascent. The situation becomes intensely critical immediately prior to piercing the sixth centre beyond which is perceived the limitless ocean of pure consciousness. At every step of ascent the *Sadhaka* is blessed with divine grace.

The awakening of Kuṇḍalinī in the sense of consciousness is the condition precedent to every form of sādhanā; in the Tantras it forms the central issue. The *mantra*, *yoga* and *japa* are considered in the Tantras as means of rousing the Kuṇḍalinī; so are *nyasa, puja,* etc., with external and internal *yantras,* images and symbols. The *bhakta* or the *jnanin* may not have consciously and deliberately to set himself about the business of rousing the *Kundalini* and making it pierce the six *cakras,* but this does not mean that the *Kundalini,* the embodied consciousness, can be 'let alone' by him. It is and must be, roused by whatever means, be it *bhakti* (devotion) or *jnana* (knowledge).

From what we have said about *Kundalini* above, it will appear that *Kundalini yoga* is not a mystery or an esoteric doctrine or a ritual. It is the basis of every *sadhana* in every form. There are different forms of *sadhana* by which this magazine of latent power can be acted upon. Faith and love do act also as the powerful means, *Karma, jnana, yoga* and *bhakti,* both severally and collectively, find each of its fullest satisfaction when the said magazine of latent power is aroused.

The unique characteristic of the Tantras lies in the fact that the philosophy of the Tantras has effected a mutually helpful and perfecting co-ordination of *karma, yoga, jnana* and *bhakti,* the four-fold path of the realization of the self. 'It has emphasised will and effort, yet self-surrender, mercy and grace have their vital place and function; and it combines the systematised ritualism of *karma* with the inner purifying process of *yoga*; the

purest *advaita jnana* with the highest unalloyed *bhakti* (devotion) and the most passionate yearning and love.'

In the contemporary spiritual history of India, the personality of Śrī Rāmakṛṣna Paramahaṁsa stands as the shining example of the Tantra *sadhakas* in the supreme. In him is found the full-fledged expression in concretised form of the aforesaid fourfold path, recognised in Indian spiritual practices (*sadhana*). His life is the living example of perfection and harmony, and man in whatever religious fold he belongs finds his ideal realizable in Śrī Ramakrișna.

The present-day crisis, as we have already posited, is the crisis in the mental in terms of the ethico-spiritual and, hence, a maladjustment in the material due, amongst other conditions, mainly to our inability to look within ourselves and find out what is going on there. Demand for inter-communication and dialogue presuppose searching, nay, re-searching of hearts, proper cultivation of which, immediately brings in sympathy and mutual understanding. The key to, or the know-how of, the solution of the present-day crisis lies in reviving the Indian *spiritual* practices and to reorient them in such a way that they might suit the present-day situation. The best illustration that can be cited in this context is the life and teachings of Śrī Rāmakṛṣna Paramahaṁsa, where we find the principles of *acceptance* (life-affirming attitude leading to belief in the existence), *analysis* (discrimination between what is real and what is unreal) and *alternation* (the principle of co-existence) have been synthesised in a living concrete way.

Let the *grace* of Śiva fall on humanity, let that *grace* move on in descending and ascending orders, let the whole world be an abode of peace and harmony, let man understand his essential nature and become *SIVA*.

